

# Bikesonoma



Newsletter of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

Issue 2

Fall 2001

*promoting bicycling for transportation and recreation*

## Bike Friendly Housing Development in Sonoma County? Yes!

*Interview with Innovative Developer Allan Strachan by SCBC Director Ted White*



*Developer Allan Strachan in Courtside Village. Streets emphasize nice architecture instead of garages.*

Over the past couple years whenever I make trips from Sebastopol to Santa Rosa on the Rodota Trail Bike Path I look over to my right at a housing development just south of the bike path and Hwy 12 between Wright Rd and Stony Point. It's called Courtside Village, a pretty typical name for a new development but I did notice how smart and sensible it was that all the houses had easy accessibility to the bike path. Some houses seemed to be only about 25 feet from the path! As I investigated further I found that the entire development has been designed with a focus on being a pedestrian and bike friendly community. To find out more I interviewed key developer Allan Strachan:

Ted White: Generally, I hate to see new housing developments springing up in Sonoma County, but yours is different. Can you describe some of the ways it differs?

Allan Strachan: I had been part of the committee that set up the urban boundary (Wright Rd.) so I felt that in

order to take pressure off developing the farmland, you want to make everything inside the boundary more livable and more dense. We designed Courtside Village to be much more dense than single family developments had been done at the time. Many of the houses here have granny units so it's really two

families on one lot; smaller lots but houses with more capacity, mix condos in with single family houses. The key principle is that the whole thing should be walkable—70 acres square is kind of the definition of walkable. Also, we have a grid-ded street pattern so that people can actually walk or bike places,



*Garages are tucked away in the service alley*

to me, the stupidest thing in the world is these cul-de-sacs where you might want to see someone that's a hundred feet away but you can't get there without walking (or driving) a mile.

With Courtside we made the streets narrower and the sidewalks wider, we get as many garages as possible off the street. You have the garages in back, architecture in front—people walking would rather see architecture, people's window decorations, flowers, gardens, or whatever than they would garage doors. Also, it creates a sense of security, if you have the living



*Car free commuting? Joe Rodota Trail bike path runs alongside housing at Courtside Village.*

portion of the house oriented towards the front, this puts more eyes on the street. -In most conventional subdivisions the garage takes up most of the front of the house. My idea of the indicator species for a safe neighborhood is an eight year old kid walking around the area without their parent, and a block or so away from home. That means that the kid feels comfortable that some adult is watching or would recognize them. Another key thing is

*Continued on inside back cover*

## SCBC CALENDAR

### SCBC Board Meetings

Last Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Environmental Center, 404 Mendocino Avenue in downtown Santa Rosa. (open to the public)

## Bikesonoma

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## Interested in helping out on Bike to Work Day this Spring?

This May the SCBC will be helping Bike to Work Day to reach new heights. Volunteers are needed to help promote Bike to Work Day, and set-up and staff several "energizer" stations throughout the county. Energizer stations offer food, juice, bike bags and other goodies to cyclists. If you know of a location which you think would serve several cyclists on please let us know. Petaluma, Healdsburg, Sonoma, Windsor all could use more stations, but new energizer stations in any good location are welcome. To volunteer or make suggestions e-mail us: [info@bikesonoma.org](mailto:info@bikesonoma.org)

# United We Pedal

This Fall was filled with troubling events that rocked our sense of national security, and challenged us to more deeply consider our current transportation and energy policies. There were various issues at play in the tragic events of September 11th. However, if we believe that we could have possibly decreased the chances of attack by being less dependent on middle east Oil, then let us act on that belief and promote more sustainable transportation now. As if there weren't already enough great reasons to bike more often, and for more uses (shopping, commuting, transporting children to school, etc.) it is now clear that the simple act of bicycling is, in itself a patriotic act. Perhaps if we realize our power for transforming our communities by encouraging more bicycling then we can really create change on both an individual and societal level.

Let's use this Winter and coming Spring to help any one who is interested in joining us on the wheel to fulfill that desire. Almost every cyclist I know has a story they tell of a friend or acquaintance who inspired them to try biking and then as they say, the rest was history. Ranking high among the many goals of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition is the increase of ridership. Part of what that means is that we, the board, staff, and members are available to the larger community as inspiration to climb aboard and start pedaling --and hopefully the rest will be history!

In this expanded issue, you'll find updates and information on several inspiring projects from Car-Free Day in Sebastopol to a new housing development that is specifically designed to be bikable and walkable, plus news on the new Regional Bike Plan, Safe Routes to Schools Bill, product reviews of commuter gear, and more.

If this is your first time reading Bikesonoma or you've been reading but haven't joined yet, please do. We are a vibrant group of cyclists working to make things better for other cyclists around the county. We need you, and frankly, if you are interested in a future for cycling here, you need us too! (See the Membership Form on the back page of this newsletter).

Sincerely

Ted White

Executive Director

Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

## Drum Roll Please, SCBC Membership Party Elects New Board

In late November we had our first annual membership meeting and party. Intrepid members braved the ridiculously rainy night, consumed lots of pizza and elected our new board of directors. Amongst those who attended were several folks from our local bike industry: Jay and Jocelyn of SyCip Designs, a custom frame builder recently relocated to Santa Rosa from San Francisco (check them out at [www.sycip.com](http://www.sycip.com)), Bill Haluzak of builder of Haluzak recumbents ([Haluzak.com](http://Haluzak.com)), and Ross Schafer, former owner of Salsa Cycles. Ross provided the evening's key-note speech which took us from childhood memories of bike adventure to his spin on the current affairs of cycling. Thanks Ross for a funny, thought-provoking, and very personal talk.

When the ballots were tallied (there were no lost chad or recount snafus!) here's what we found out: The new SCBC board retains Lou Salz, Ken Wells, Gary Wysocky, Mike Eunice, Deborah Fudge, Oren Noah, Linda Picton, and Warren Watkins and we welcome new members—Chris Culver, Steve Schmitz and Doug Cutting. Outgoing board members are Joel Woodhull and Jan Bush, (Fortunately, Joel promises to continue as our webmaster), thanks very much to both Joel and Jan for their time and support during our first year.

## Bike Friendly Housing...

*Continued from front page*

that we have mixed use; we put all our civic and commercial stuff in the center of the 70 square acres instead of on the periphery (like a typical strip Mall) so that people have something to walk to. So, you don't have to have people driving just to go to the gym or get a quart of milk. (When Courtside Village is complete there will be a school, a gym, tennis courts, a church, a park, and various stores and offices all in the center of the "town".)

TW: Are you a developer by career?

AS: I am now, but I wasn't before. I spent the seventies in the human services industry, and in the 80's in high tech communications. I was semi-retired, and then this thing came along. If I had known how much time and effort it would be I probably wouldn't have gotten involved but once you get into it you have no choice!

TW: How amenable was the City of Santa Rosa to all these innovative design ideas?

AS: At the policy level the city council was very supportive, they wanted it as a model to influence the rest of the development in this area, and they needed somebody to do it and prove that the houses would sell. The conventional wisdom at the time was "you couldn't do houses with granny units, you couldn't do alley ways and garages in back, you couldn't do mixed use and have commercial near houses. So the City wanted us to do it so that the other guys would copy it.

Working with the Engineering Dept. was different. The whole function of the City Engineering Dept is oriented towards cars. But Mike Martini and architect Allan Cohen helped us change some standards and get narrower streets, etc. The city council and planning commission

always voted for our ideas, sometimes even over the objections of the Engineering Dept.

TW: Tell me about the bike path (a section of the Rodota Trail) between Stony Point and Wright Rd.) and how you linked into it?

AS: Around 1995, we were trying to figure out where to run our sewer line, and it turns out the best place for it was under the railroad right of way. So since we had to dig that up anyway we put it back as a bike path and we also connected it up with Sebastopol Ave. I always thought the bike path would be an amenity for the development, once we could bring it up to Sebastopol Ave—but nobody else in the development thought it would. The banks couldn't go with it, bankers drive with their rear view mirror, as do most developers, they're not looking at the future, they look at what's the last thing that sold, and if nobody's done anything different, then that's that. My partners also thought I was out of my head but the City wanted it and had we not been able to do the section next to Courtside it might have been another twenty years before the Rodota Trail got finished. Before then the bike path was kind of an excursion thing you'd see people drive to the bike path, park and take their bike down and ride just a little section.

TW: I like how Courtside's design addresses both transportation habits and the personal relationships of the residents.

AS: I expect kids will ride their bikes to go to the Center of Courtside to go to the stores or whatever. So you should get a reduction of vehicular trips and a much stronger sense of community. And you'll have a lower rate of what I call "social casualties" like divorce, loss of job,

kid running away from home that sort of thing". Because these people will know each other better and they'll get more support from their community.

In a typical subdivision you drive down the street, punch your little garage door opener and disappear into your garage; and in the back yard you have six foot fences all around-- chances are, you won't know too many people on your street. You reverse all that like with the designs we're doing here at Courtside and chances are people will know a significant number of other people in their community.

TW: Do you think this development will positively influence future housing or will we just build more sprawling car-dominated suburbs?

AS: I think this project will have a real impact and that the Post War development pattern (typical cul-de-sac type subdivisions) will hopefully turn out to be an aberration.



*New and improved bike path signage at Wright Road provides the important details. The old sign, handwritten on a piece of scrap plywood with hot pink spray paint simply said: Bike Path Ends!*

# MTC adopts Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Bike Plan

In December the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) approved a new Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Bicycle Plan (RBP). What exactly is the RTP? Basically, it is a set of guidelines and budget allotments for various transportation related projects ranging from road and highway projects to transit and bike/pedestrian projects. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of money goes to road and highway projects, leaving bicycle projects a miniscule part of the overall budget. However, within the new Regional Bike Plan there are some great elements which were adopted by the MTC which will improve current conditions and enhance future opportunities for cyclists. One is the creation of a regional bicycle working group. This will be an oversight committee comprised of real bicyclists (imagine that!); several of those selected are currently directors of Bay Area bike coalitions (the SCBC will not have a direct representative on the new MTC oversight committee but we are part of the Regional Bicycle Advocacy Coalition which will be in close contact with the oversight committee.) This group will work with the MTC on an ongoing basis to represent the needs and concerns of cyclists. The other major highlight in the Bike Plan, is the adoption of Cal Trans Deputy Directive 64 which will make MTC

review all road and transit projects to “ensure that bicycling is a convenient, safe, and practical means of transportation throughout the Bay Area for all Bay Area residents.” MTC intends to echo DD64, and the Directive, in fact, serves as a framework for the Bike Plan itself. For example, here are some excerpts from DD 64:

*“The Department fully considers the needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclists and persons with disabilities) in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations and project development activities and products.”* CalTrans DD64

**“The Department fully considers the needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclists and persons with disabilities) in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations and project development activities and products. This includes incorporation of the best available standards in all of the Departments practices. The Department adopts the best practice concepts in the US DOT Policy Statement on Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure.”**

**“Encourage local jurisdictions to adopt ordinances requiring bicycle**

**parking and storage, shower, and locker facilities for all new developments and major redevelopments.”**

**“Encourage local jurisdictions to offer incentives for employers who provide indoor bicycle parking for their employees.”**

DD 64 even contains sections showing real wisdom and humanity:

**“The planning and project development process seeks to provide the people of California with a degree of mobility that is in balance with other values. They must ensure that economic, social and environmental effects are fully considered along with technical issues, so that the best interest of the public is served.”**

Regional bike advocates also came up with a program they called “Safe Routes to Transit” which they hoped the MTC would officially incorporate into the Plan”. As the name implies, this program would be aimed specifically at creating more intermodal travel by improving conditions for

reaching mass transit by bike and improving bike facilities at transit stations themselves (parking, etc.). Safe Routes to Transit calls for an evolution from the “park and ride” to more of a “ride and ride” scenario. Though the MTC did not officially adopt the program into the Bike Plan per se, they showed a lot of enthusiasm for it. So, it is up to

the oversight committee to continue promoting the idea in various ways in association with the MTC.

Lastly, on a related note, because the Bay Area is out of compliance with current air quality standards there is a lawsuit now in progress against the MTC (the lead attorney is from the Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund). To address this, the California Air Resources Board has sent a letter to the MTC advocating increased use of Transit and this could further aid bike advocates in pushing the Safe Routes to Transit concept.

# Interbike Product Reviews...

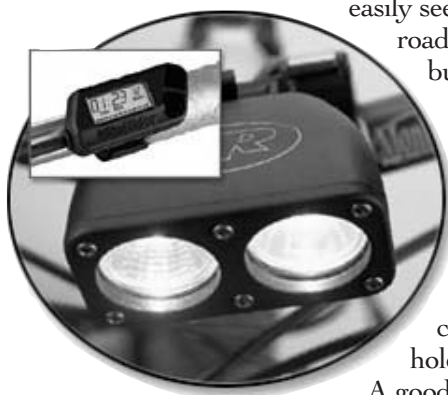
by Christine Culver

For gadget junkies, the cycling world is heaven. There are many toys to be had. The joy of figuring out the perfect gear ratio, researching which water bottle is lightest, or discovering the rolling resistance of a particular folding tire can bring much enjoyment to a gear geek. But for the commuter, it goes beyond the gadget, to the point of what will make your ride safe and what will get you there in time, if at all.

Cycling for transportation takes products to a different level than what you need for racing or exercise. Of course, it is important to have the right "stuff" for those activities. However, the commuter depends on his or her gear to get to work or school. This is why commuters should put some serious thought into what they ride and how it functions.

At Interbike, the annual bike industry trade show, I visited many companies to find out what they are offering to enhance our commutes for 2002.

Lights have come a long way, and make a huge difference in safety. The first function of a bike light is to make the cyclist



easily seen by others on the road. This is important, but while the basic bar mount will make a cyclist night legal, often the battery light does not illuminate the road in front of the cyclist. This increases the chance of hitting pot-holes, debris, or cracks.

A good light should lighten the road, so that the cyclist can see

what is ahead and avoid problems.

NiteRider offers many quality lights ranging from the Trail Rat 2.0 at \$99.95 to the Digital Pro 12-LCD at \$379.95.

The Trail Rat is a lightweight, rechargeable system with a 2:20 hour burn time. The battery pack has been redesigned to be small enough to fit on almost any frame, or to be carried in a jersey pocket or hydration pack.

The Digital Pro-12 LCD is NiteRider's most technologically advanced lighting system. It comes with six light levels: 6/9/12/20/32 plus walking mode. Burn times range from nine hours in the walking mode to 1:25 hours @ 32w. A few upgrades from earlier generations of this light include an eight-bit microprocessor, backlit LCD display, smart battery technology and the new Micro-Brute five-hour charger.

The LCD display shows the remaining burn time or percent remaining, light output level and battery level. The

Commuter Safety Flasher function on this light makes this an ideal light for the commuter. This is a rapidly flashing light that helps folks in cars see you. And it works! I have done my own unscientific field test to see if it makes a difference during the day, and I believe that it does. Plus, it comes with a SOS mode (that I hope I never need to use).

A great addition to either of these lights is the Daylight Visible Taillight. This taillight is 10 times brighter than any other on the market and 20 to 30 times brighter than most stand-alone taillights, with 360 degree visibility. I have even had car drivers ask what kind of light it is because they were so amazed at its visibility!

This taillight works with any 2002 NiteRider system. Past generations were system specific, meaning that if you had two different NiteRider systems you needed separate rear lights to go with them. The system battery powers the taillight via a pass-through connector. It can be operated independently from the headlight, and can be set as either a steady or pulsing light. For more information visit [www.niterider.com](http://www.niterider.com) or phone 858-268-9376.

Ever get caught in the rain on your way home? O2 Rainwear from by Rain Shield is an inexpensive answer to a lightweight waterproof jacket. The Cycling Jacket, made from 3M Proporetm, is a breathable and compact performance jacket that won't cost you an arm and a leg. This jacket targets the basic function of keeping dry; there aren't a bunch of hip and cool features. While it may not be as durable as a \$300 GoreTex jacket, what it does at its suggested retail of \$32 is awesome.



Also available from Rain Shield is a hooded Multi-Use Suit with a suggested retail of \$48. For more information, see [www.rainshield.com](http://www.rainshield.com) or call 888-543-1894.

## Car-Free Day: The Concept That Shook Sebastopol

In case you haven't heard, this is the idea: designate one day a month, i.e. the first Sunday, in which citizens of a small town are encouraged to voluntarily not drive their cars and discover the joys of walking, biking, using transit, etc. If citizens must drive they are encouraged to fly a green ribbon on their car in support of those who do go car-free, and then try to go car-free themselves some other day of the month. This is the concept that shook Sebastopol.

"When we in Sebastopol are asked which issues we are most concerned about, what always pops up is traffic. Then when we look at our overall environmental problems, the impact of automobiles is right up there on top, and when we look at solutions that are within our control, driving less seems to be the easiest." says Sammy Nasr, who, along with Portia Sinnott, Fred DeVilliers, and Peter Schurch proposed the idea as a city resolution. They are all members of the local group "Sebastopol Car-Lite".

To most of us bicycling-types, and certainly to many others the idea seemed very exciting, but to some it apparently struck terror in their hearts. The resolution came before the City Council in November but the vote ended in a two-

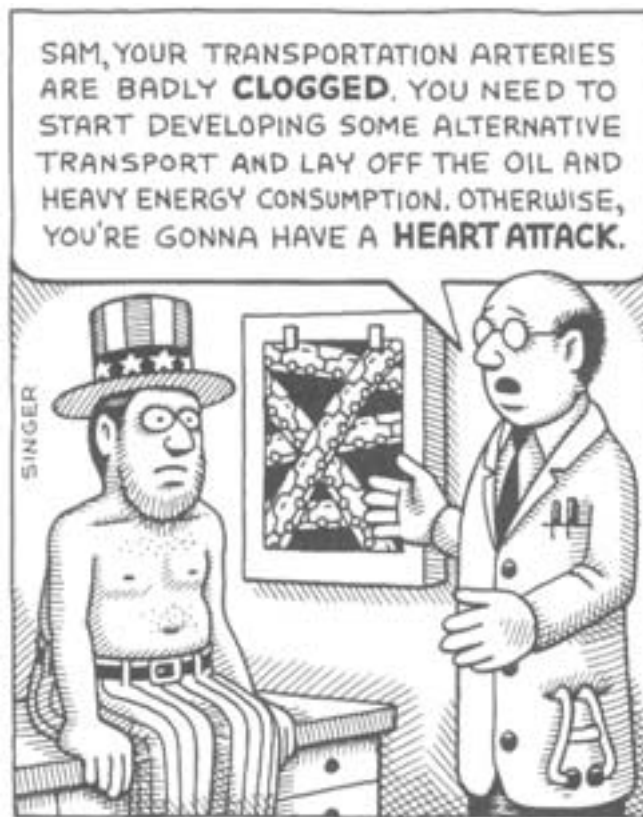
two stalemate. That meeting saw the council chambers packed with passionate citizens arguing both for and against, and a fist-fight nearly erupted capping a surprisingly dramatic evening.

Friend of alternative transport, Chris Coursey, wrote a great piece in the Press Democrat about the whole affair, and seemed to be shaking his head in disgust (or maybe it was amusement) wondering how some of the

the editor: "We are talking about one voluntary day a month here. Twelve shopping days out of 365 if one wants to give it some kind of perspective. If people are moved to violence over such an idea, good luck getting them out of their cars until their cold dead fingers are pried from steering wheels and cash registers."

The idea finally came up for a vote again at the January Council meeting.

complimentary, but he still didn't want to vote for it." So, what's next? "We're still going to do it" says Sinnott, her group didn't want to force it down anybody's throat, so instead, they will develop and promote the idea themselves and once it's gotten off the ground then people can decide for themselves whether they like it or not. For more info contact Portia Sinnott at 824-9931 or go to [www.monitor.net/~wastenot/](http://www.monitor.net/~wastenot/) and click on "Car-Lite".



Cartoon by Andy Singer

Sebastopol merchants could have calculate expected losses of \$60,000-\$1,000,000 if the resolution were passed.

In response to Coursey's column and the wild council meeting, Nanette Schlessman, a cyclist from Santa Rosa summed it up wonderfully in a letter to

But the group who proposed it decided to pull it from a vote. "We wanted consensus, but it wasn't happening," said Portia Sinnott. "There was still a lot of misconception amongst the public about what the proposal really was, and Council member Bob Anderson was

## SONOMA COUNTY BICYCLE COALITION PARTNERS WITH AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION TO CO-PRESENT 5TH ANNUAL TWO ROCK AND ROLL RIDE

This June, the popular Two Rock and Roll ride will be presented jointly by the American Lung Association and the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition. ALA's Jenny Bard, the ride's original director will continue to do outreach and promotion while SCBC's Doug Simon has generously offered to volunteer as our lead organizer from the SCBC and take care of other logistics. The ride offers several routes for riders of all abilities, including families, and features the beautiful backroads of west Sonoma County.

Mike Eunice of the SCBC pitched the idea of the partnership to the rest of the board and it was decided to give it a trial run this year—if things go well, the SCBC will likely take a bigger role in presenting the ride in coming years. For our collaboration this year, the American Lung Association will donate 30 percent of the net proceeds of the event to the SCBC. Last year, the net was \$27,000, so that could translate into \$8,000 for the coalition. Jenny has already obtained \$23,500 in corporate sponsorships, so the event is off to a good start.

This is a great opportunity to help put on a great

event to promote cycling, clean air and healthy lungs, and put a big check into our account at the same time! Thanks to Jenny, Mike and Doug for getting this off the ground.

To ensure the success of this partnership please volunteer to help us put on this event. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities available, including ride promotion, rider recruitment, and advance and day-of logistics. Most volunteer assignments only require 3-8 hours of your time.

For more information and to volunteer please contact Doug Simon at 577-0113 or e-mail him at: [DSimon@santa-rosa.ca.us](mailto:DSimon@santa-rosa.ca.us). You can also contact Jenny Bard at 527-5864 or email [jbard@alac.org](mailto:jbard@alac.org).

For more details about the ride, visit: [www.lungusa.org/redwoodempire](http://www.lungusa.org/redwoodempire).

## Safe Routes to Schools Bill passes!

The next generation of human-powered travelers won a victory earlier this Fall when in November, Governor Davis signed the Safe Routes to Schools Bill, extending the program for another three years. The Bill will make state funds available to communities for infrastructural improvements such as bike lanes, sidewalks, traffic calming features, etc.. Chris Morfas, of the California Bicycle Coalition confirmed to the SCBC that both cities and counties are eligible to propose projects which make walking and biking, a more safe and viable alternative for kids getting to and from school. Morfas said projects which have strong local support, impact significant numbers of people (kids) and create larger travel networks as opposed to piece-meal projects will have the best chance of being funded. Interestingly, the bill also allows for 10% of any project's budget to cover education, which perhaps the SCBC could provide as an independent contractor, should a project within Sonoma County receive funding. This bill suggests an exciting shift away from the Mommy-as-chauffeur dilemma we are experiencing now.



*Angel of the Asphalt - circa 1954*

