

# The Urbane Cyclist

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition quarterly

Issue 23

www.vacc.bc.ca

Winter 2004/05

## The Bridges of Madison County

Dave Perfitt

Ah... 'The Bridges of Madison County'...SO romantic! On the other hand, 'The Bridges of the Lower Mainland'... Ugh, SO problematic!

Well, it has happened. Officials from the BC Ministry of Transportation have informed the VACC that complaints of speeding cyclists on the Lions Gate Bridge (LGB) are on the increase. We fought for wider sidewalks and got them. Now cyclists are easily reaching speeds of over 50 km/hr on the downhill sections. This may be fine if one has the sidewalk all to oneself, but recklessly passing pedestrians and slower cyclists at significantly higher speeds is just plain unsafe and insensitive. Go figure: as cyclists we demand that higher pecking order road users such as trucks, buses, and cars be sensitive and respect our space and safety envelope while overtaking us. Why is it that there are always some rogues out there that just don't get the 'golden rule', and rudely fly by pedestrians, and slower cyclists that share the same sidewalk? Share the road and share the sidewalk!

Some Bridge sidewalk user habits to consider adopting:

- Pass pedestrians at jogging speed and give them as wide a berth as possible
- Get a rear-view mirror for your bike and become aware of faster traffic coming up on you from behind
- Get a bike bell or use your voice to make others aware of your approach
- Pedestrians, runners, and in-line skaters should consider *traveling*



Bike lane next to reverse angle parking (see pg 3)

**south on the east sidewalk and north on the west sidewalk, to see cyclists approaching.** Often it seems, pedestrians are easily spooked when being passed from behind, so facing the predominant direction of bicycle flow will minimize the surprise encounters. Bike traffic statistics for the Lions Gate Bridge show that over 90% of cyclists go the same direction as the motor traffic.

Finally, remember that many users of the sidewalk may be tourists that are not experienced in sharing a busy sidewalk. A trip, by foot, across the LGB is a GREAT and free experience for tourists. Let's keep it that way!

Unfortunately, the VACC general listserv at [vacc@communicopia.net](mailto:vacc@communicopia.net) is no longer available to us. A new listserv has been created at [VACC@yahoogroups.com](mailto:VACC@yahoogroups.com).

If you are interested in joining the new VACC list for discussions of an organizational or regional nature, please send an e-mail to [vacc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:vacc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). If you were a member of the old list, you will still need to join the new list.

## The Urbane Cyclist

Published quarterly by the Vancouver Area  
Cycling Coalition (VACC)

The views in this publication are not  
necessarily those of the VACC

### VACC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Colin Brander – President	604 733-9265
Marion Orser - Vice President	604 520-7636
Jack Becker - Treasurer	604 681-5744
Ursula Scheid - Secretary	604 323-2279
Lai-Fung Chew	604 515-8848
Jason Dowd	604 267-9762
John Fair	604-986-9220
David Perfitt	604 988-5454

### FOUNDING MEMBER

British Columbia  
Cycling Coalition



### MEET US

The VACC Board meetings are open to all interested in bicycling in Greater Vancouver. We generally meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Phone **604 878-8222** for details.

### INTERNET

Keep up on the latest cycling issues and events, Join one of our e-mail lists at [www.vacc.bc.ca/lists](http://www.vacc.bc.ca/lists)

### GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

We welcome articles (300 words or less) and letters about cycling in Greater Vancouver.

Submissions may be sent to:

**The Urbane Cyclist**  
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition  
PO Box 0074 641 Columbia St.  
New Westminster BC V3M 1A8  
**604 878-8222**

Or e-mail: [newsletter@vacc.bc.ca](mailto:newsletter@vacc.bc.ca)

We reserve the right  
to edit submissions  
for clarity and length.

**Next deadline:**

**Friday,  
January 21 2005**



## President's Message **Colin Brander**

I must admit that spring is my favourite time of year as I enjoy seeing the days getting longer, drier and warmer. Fall on the other hand means cooler, wetter weather and shorter days. We are lucky in the Lower Mainland that our weather allows us to cycle safely year round by taking a few easy steps. There may be some days with snow and or freezing temperatures when you may not find it safe or comfortable to cycle, but those days are few and far between.

What I find disconcerting is the number of "stealth mode" cyclists who are almost completely invisible; riding without lighting or reflectors and often in dark clothing. The BC Motor Vehicle Act requires that cyclists have a front light, a rear light and a rear reflector. The cost of bicycle lighting has come down over the years and a basic set of LED bicycle lights can be purchased for about \$25, are quite bright and the batteries are good for hundreds of hours. (Don't forget to carry a spare set of batteries.) This is a small price to pay for one's personal safety. Basic lighting sets do meet the legal requirements and do let drivers know that you are there. More expensive rechargeable lighting sets also do a good job of lighting up the road, even in wet weather.

Another thing many cyclists underestimate is the value of bright clothing. I see too many cyclists wearing black or other dark clothing with no reflective material. Bright reflective clothing can mean the difference between blending into the surroundings and being seen. When I first started cycling to work in Downtown Vancouver in the winter, many of my co-workers would comment on how bright my clothing was and I would need to explain that was the reason why I wear it. While breathable cycling clothing can be quite expensive, there are other more affordable alternatives that do the job quite nicely. Many cyclists even use garbage bags instead of booties to keep their feet dry. Often cycling rain gear will pay for itself if you factor in your savings in transit fares and/or reduced commuting costs.

Please do yourself a favour and ensure that you are bright and visible on your bike. I hope to see you out there!

**SUNSHINE DINER**

2756 WEST BROADWAY  
VANCOUVER BC V6K 2G4

TEL: 604-7337717

FAX: 604-7307105

EMAIL [sunshinediner@shaw.ca](mailto:sunshinediner@shaw.ca)



## Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2004

### Bonnie Fenton

The ProWalk/ProBike Conference, sponsored by the American National Center for Bicycling and Walking ([www.bikewalk.org](http://www.bikewalk.org)), was held in Victoria in early September, drawing 600 advocates, planners, engineers, politicians, academics, and others interested in making the world a friendlier place to get around on two wheels or two feet. Highlights included:

#### Economic arguments for cycling facilities

A San Francisco planner did a study on the economic effects of traffic calming on urban small businesses

([www.sfbike.org/download/bikeplan/bikelan.es.pdf](http://www.sfbike.org/download/bikeplan/bikelan.es.pdf)). Qualitative results included:

- Economic revitalisation
- Increased street attractiveness
- Reduction of automobile speed
- More cyclist customers
- Local people shopping locally

#### Health, the environment, and active living

Clear links were drawn between health, the environment, active living, and transportation policies. Dr. Andrew Pipe of the University of Ottawa spoke about the costs of inactivity and other health effects that result from a sedentary lifestyle.

Some eye-opening facts:

- In 2001, only 44% of adult Canadians were active enough to create health benefits
- 2/3 of kids aren't active enough for optimal development
- Air pollution causes 1,900 premature deaths and costs \$600 million to the Ontario government annually

#### Advocacy

Cycling advocates need to talk about the health impacts of energy use, transportation, and land use planning. In many cases, partnerships between cycling advocates and health advocates could prove beneficial to both groups.

Some basic advice on advocacy included:

- Learn to speak engineer-ese
- Make sure your ideas are included in official planning documents and maps
- Get specific commitments in writing in the master plan
- Know city timelines and produce information at the most effective time

#### Cycling skills education

In general, almost nothing is invested in cycling safety education and, although they may want to ride to work, many people lack the skills to ride safely and confidently in traffic. Both Victoria ([www.biketoworkvictoria.ca](http://www.biketoworkvictoria.ca)) and Colorado have programmes to teach people safe commuting skills, and the VACC is looking into developing such an initiative in the Lower Mainland. To find out more, contact [volunteer@vacc.bc.ca](mailto:volunteer@vacc.bc.ca).

#### Women and cycling

A study was done in San Francisco looking into women and cycling ([www.sfbike.org/?women](http://www.sfbike.org/?women)). Their goal was to promote cycling for everyday transportation, where currently only 25% of cyclists are women. Reasons cited for not riding included not feeling safe with cars and a desire for more bike lanes. Indeed, San Francisco has seen a 50% increase in ridership where bike lanes have been installed.

#### Infrastructure

A variety of infrastructure ideas were discussed. One example (used in Seattle and Salt Lake City) is reverse angle parking. It provides a safer environment for cyclists since drivers can see them more easily when pulling out. ([www.ci.slc.ut.us/transportation/Parking/RA\\_P.htm](http://www.ci.slc.ut.us/transportation/Parking/RA_P.htm))

#### Other useful links

- Go for Green: [www.goforgreen.ca](http://www.goforgreen.ca)
- Citizens for Safe Cycling: [www.cfsc.ottawa.on.ca](http://www.cfsc.ottawa.on.ca)
- Thunderhead Alliance: [www.thunderheadalliance.org](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org)
- Velo Quebec: [www.velo.qc.ca](http://www.velo.qc.ca)
- Bike Winter: [www.bikewinter.org](http://www.bikewinter.org)

- International Bicycle Fund:  
www.ibike.org
- Velo Ontario: www.veloontario.ca
- Chicago Bike Plan:  
www.biketraffic.org/2010/1pagebrief.php

## Culinary Cruisin'

**John Fair** *jfair@shaw.ca*

I am one of those fortunate people who works at home. That means I don't commute by bicycle. If you like cycling, that's a problem! Over the years I have used my weekend mornings to cycle and explore our city. I started by cycling to the nearest coffee shop. I decided I needed a good old fashioned breakfast; so the search began. It had to meet certain criteria: a) far enough to allow a good workout, b) Open early in the morning, c) a varied menu of quality food at a reasonable price, d) close to a bike route so the ride is enjoyable.

I'd like to share with you a couple of gems that I discovered. The first is the Sunshine Diner on Broadway, near MacDonald Street.

It is decorated like a 50's style diner, complete with pictures, statues and music. The waiters all wear t-shirts with a picture of Elvis and the caption "Elvis is alive at the Sunshine". You can choose a traditional breakfast of bacon & eggs or a more healthy poached eggs on spinach, with feta cheese. There is even a bike rack in front.

The other gem is Angelina's, near the New Westminster Quay Hotel. Follow the 7/11 trail, to the Fraser River waterfront. On a sunny day, you can sit on a quiet deck and watch the river activity. The restaurant features eggs & bratwurst or a variety of Dutch pannekoeks with syrup. The couple that run it are friendly and efficient (and impressed that we ride from North Van).

Now that buses have bike racks, I'm hoping to travel to more distant communities. If you know of any other gems out there, pass them on to the listserve. Maybe the idea will catch on with tourists who want to see the city and get some exercise. A different kind of B & B (Bike & Breakfast)!

# Cycling Around Greater Vancouver



## Lock & Ride

Rent your own bike locker for just \$10 per month available at most Millennium SkyTrain Stations, Ladner Park & Ride, Phibbs Exchange, Sexsmith Park & Ride, King George, Scott Road, 22nd Street and Main Street Stations. For more information on how to rent a locker, call us at 604-453-4500.



## Try a Combo

**Bike & Bus** – Take your bike part way there. Many buses are bike rack-equipped; each rack holds two bikes.  
**Bike & SkyTrain** – Take your bike on SkyTrain, weekdays between 9:30 am - 3:00 pm and after 6:30 pm. On weekends, if there's space, you can go anytime. Be sure to enter through the last door of the train.  
**Bike & SeaBus** – Take your bike on SeaBus any time. SeaBus can carry six bikes per sailing.



## Map it Out

It's easy to get around on two wheels with your TransLink Cycling Map. Pick up a copy at retail locations throughout the Lower Mainland. For a detailed list of vendors visit: [www.translink.bc.ca/transportation\\_services/bikes](http://www.translink.bc.ca/transportation_services/bikes)



## Provincial Funding for Cycling Infrastructure

*Excerpts from the VACC and MoT press releases compiled by Ursula Scheid*

An announcement by BC Minister of Transportation Kevin Falcon of funding for a cycling infrastructure partnership program was received positively by the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (the VACC). Provincial government participation is a necessary first step for the development of the potential of cycling as an alternative form of transportation to cars.

"We need to create an infrastructure that supports the possibility of all cycling types, commuter, recreation touring etc. We want people to have real choice", says VACC president Colin Brander.

Cycling advocates are hopeful that Sunday's announcement by Minister Falcon is just the beginning and that more cycling funding will be forthcoming in the next budget.

Here is the essence of the news release:

The Province is dedicating \$2 million over two years with the possibility of \$1 million annual renewals to the Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships Program, a cost-shared program between the province and municipal and regional governments to build new cycling routes that link existing modes of alternative transit.

Provincial funding for the Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships program comes from the province's four-year, \$40 million Transportation Partnerships Program.

"Creating cycling corridors is an important component of our plan to develop fully integrated, alternative transportation systems throughout the province," said Falcon. "As an avid cyclist I know that aside from being great exercise cycling is, for many, a viable commuter option. Reducing vehicle use means reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, and that's helping to create a cleaner environment."

"This government is proud of the co-operative relationships we have with our municipal and regional partners," said Falcon. "The Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships Program is another example of that healthy, working relationship."

## Road Rage – That Sensational Beast David Hay

Recently our law firm won a judgment on behalf of a bicycle courier who was the victim of a motorist's road rage. The story was the centre piece of the front page of the Vancouver Sun (see August 31, 2004, "Road Rage Victim Finds Justice in Court"). Though road rage is apparently newsworthy, it seems to be an increasingly common phenomenon.

Predictably, the press focused on the sensational aspects of the incident while ignoring in large measure the legal framework underlying the judgment.

Let us examine the facts. My client, age 18 at the time, was riding his bicycle south on Fir Street in the curb lane. He passed the stopped traffic riding next to the curb until reaching the light at Broadway. He then moved his bicycle in front of the motorist in the curb lane. The motorist, who was at the time talking on his cell phone, resented the cyclist's manoeuvre. He lowered his window and profanely demanded that he move his bike. An argument ensued. The parties exchanged insults, one unfortunate event led to another, and the situation culminated in the motorist punching and kicking the cyclist in the face.

*Angelina's*

For Fine Breakfast and Lunch

Open: 7:00 AM - 2:00PM

Closed Tuesdays

*Angelina and Hendrik*

#115 - 960 Quayside Drive

604-520-6468

New Westminster, B.C. V3M 6G2

Angelinas@shaw.ca

The police were summoned and laid charges against the motorist. However, the Plaintiff was embittered and had lost trust in the police.

He felt they had not supported him as a victim of unprovoked violence because they initially treated the incident as a consensual fight. For that reason he did not appear at the criminal trial and the charges were dismissed.

The cyclist subsequently retained me, and our firm brought suit against the motorist for civil damages. The motorist did not enter an Appearance to the initial suit and we took default judgment. We went further and had the damages specifically assessed and a judgment for a fixed amount entered against the non-appearing motorist. He eventually awoke from his legal slumber and retained a lawyer to set aside the judgment, on the basis of his contention that he never received a copy of the original pleadings, despite the sworn Affidavit evidence of a veteran process server to the contrary.

In terms of his defence, as one might expect, the motorist said that he only inflicted one blow, while the Plaintiff cyclist and the independent witness indicated the motorist beat him up to the point where he sustained multiple fractures to his face. The motorist was so enraged that an independent witness says he threatened her when she tried to intervene. The action went to a full trial. Mr. Justice Holmes of the Supreme Court of British Columbia heard the evidence of the Plaintiff, the Defendant, and the independent witness, as to what had occurred. He rejected the motorist's account of what happened as "absurd".

In cases involving road rage, it is open to the victim to not only seek general damages (pain and suffering, loss of quality

of life, etc) but also aggravated and punitive damages. Aggravated damages are compensatory. They are meant to embrace exceptional circumstances in which there is a degree of humiliation, or a loss of dignity, or both.

Punitive damages are meant to punish and make an example of the motorist with a view to deterring others from like conduct. Punitive damages are typically not available if the motorist has been "punished" in Criminal Court. That of course did not occur in our case.

Ultimately, our client recovered general damages and aggravated damages. The judge was reluctant to award punitive damages because he found no evidence of any history or pattern of similar conduct, and the incident appeared to him to be quite out of character for the motorist, rather than part of a general pattern of behaviour.

An important feature of the case and one to remember in road rage cases, is that when the rage occurs outside the vehicle, the motorist will not have access to insurance to cover the damages awarded. Accordingly, cases such as these often involve two battles; first, providing liability for assault and getting judgment, and second, collecting on the judgment. Unfortunately, the second battle can consume as much time and effort as the first in cases where no assets are registered in the motorist's name.

Finally, the particular motorist in this case has appealed, an event which has not generated any news coverage.

*David W. Hay is a litigation lawyer and partner at RBS Lawyers. RBS Lawyers is a full service downtown Vancouver law firm delivering legal advice and solutions in all areas of practice. The information above is not legal advice. Anyone seeking legal advice should call David directly at 604 - 661-9250, or send an e-mail to [dwhay@rbs.com](mailto:dwhay@rbs.com).*

*Correction: Tailwinds*

*To the City of Vancouver for the well-marked access to the Knight Street Bridge. This was incorrectly attributed to the Ministry of Transportation in the Fall 2004 edition of this newsletter.*

# Short-Cutting or Rat Running through the Neighbourhood on Bike Route Streets. Is it Time to Stop it? Jamie Bennett

*(Foreword – Jack Becker)*

Bike Routes within the City of Vancouver have been very successful in allowing people to use their bicycles as a realistic transportation mode. Cycling on quiet, low volume motorized traffic streets has attracted and motivated people to make the move to cycling. With traffic calming on these streets the residents can enjoy the peace and quiet that such measures bring, while still being able to access their homes by cars. Unfortunately, drivers have also noted that these streets are quiet. With more and more cyclist activated traffic signals, and the increased volume of cyclists on these routes, drivers also know that waiting time at signals will be short. So, short-cutting started making these streets less desirable for cyclists, and less inviting for non-cyclists to make that switch to the better way of commuting.

What is becoming apparent is the need to stop the growth of motorized vehicle traffic on bike routes, particularly the more popular ones. It is time to return the motorized traffic level back to what it was initially when the route was implemented. It is time to make the street a bike route again and a quiet road for the street residents.

Having lived in Mount Pleasant for many years it has been great watching our community develop. One of the things that makes it special is our bike routes. Along with all the amazing benefits, there have been a few challenges that have come up.

In our neighbourhood, it is the flow of traffic that has increased, especially shortcutting to Main Street using the bike routes. With our 'traffic calmed' area it is challenging to get through by car, however this has created a strange micro traffic issue. It's dangerous and offensive in our otherwise quiet intersection.

Throughout the day, cars turn on to Ontario St. southbound (from Broadway) to get to Main St. They then drive (often aggressively) up the Ontario St. Bike Route and shortcut the roundabout on to the 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. Bike Route. This is a significant challenge for all who use the bike routes and is also noisy, smelly, and offensive.

It would be great to know how my neighbours and I can voice our concerns to the appropriate people.

My suggestions might include:

- Local traffic only signs around Ontario and Broadway, perhaps a centre mounted sign to restrict traffic flow.
- Signs on the roundabout that better remind people that they must go around, not shortcut left.

## Work with the VACC

**To become involved in our current projects, please contact the committee chairs!**

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby                     | Mike 604 444-4068    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Valley and SkyTrain | Richard 604 733-1764 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising                 | Fulton 604 526-3585  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Westminster             | Andrew 604 521-2742  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Shore                 | Dave 604 988-5454    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey                      | Ian 604 576-4425     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vancouver                   | Jack 604 681-5744    |
- I want to contribute to the VACC by doing the following:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you!***

- Police presence to deter traffic.

The most offensive are corporate trucks and vehicles, and the city's fleets. We have been doing our polite activism by calling the city dispatchers when their vehicles make illegal moves in our neighbourhood. At the same time we let them know it is offensive to drive through someone's community in loud, smelly delivery trucks.

*Jamie Bennett is a proud cyclist, a member of the Mount Pleasant community, and a resident on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.*

**Tailwinds...**

- To the Ministry of Transportation for providing \$2 million matching funds for cycling projects under the new "Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships Program."
- To the Ministry of Health for participating in the announcement for the "Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships Program." and for acknowledging the health benefits of active transportation.

**Headwinds...**

- To the Ministry of Transportation for providing only \$1 million per year for "Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships Program" and for unrealistic deadlines for the first year. Hopefully, the Ministry will realize the importance of cycling and provide a more realistic amount in the near future.

**JOIN THE VACC!**

Yes, I want to cycle for a better community

1<sup>st</sup> person \_\_\_\_\_  
 2<sup>nd</sup> person \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The VACC does not sell or give out address information. The VACC reserves the right to contact individual members through the above information.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please e-mail The Urbane Cyclist to me | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00 Individual               |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00 Fixed/Student/Low Income |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.00 Each additional          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00 Corporate/Organization   |

**I heard about the VACC:**

- through the media
- from this newsletter
- via the website
- from a friend
- from another cyclist
- at a community event
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

11/04

Please make cheques payable to:

**Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition**

And mail, along with this application to:  
 VACC Memberships  
 PO Box 40074 RPO Royal City  
 New Westminster BC V3M 6J7

**Did you know...?**

The more letters written and the more phone calls made, the more likely cycling conditions will improve.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

Who to write about issues in The Urbane Cyclist:

Hon. Gordon Campbell  
**Premier**  
 PO Box 9041  
 STN PROV GOVT  
 Victoria BC V8W 9E1  
 premier@gov.bc.ca  
 Phone: 250 387-1715  
 Fax: 250 387-0087

Honourable Kevin Falcon  
**Minister of Transportation**  
 PO Box 9055  
 STN PROV GOVT  
 Victoria BC V8W 9E2  
 Phone: 250 387-1978  
 Fax: 250 356-2290  
 Minister.Transportation@gems5.gov.bc.ca

**City Of Burnaby**  
 Mayor Derek Corrigan and Council  
 4949 Canada Way  
 Burnaby BC V5G 1M2  
 Phone: 604 294-7944  
 Fax: 604 294-7724  
 postmaster@city.burnaby.bc.ca

**City of New Westminster**  
 Mayor Wayne Wright and Council  
 511 Royal Avenue  
 New Westminster BC V3L 1H9  
 Phone: 604 527-4522  
 Fax: 604 527-4594  
 wwright@city.new-westminster.bc.ca

**City of Surrey**  
 Mayor Doug McCallum and Council  
 14245 – 56<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
 Surrey BC V3X 3A2  
 Phone: 604 591-4126  
 Fax: 604 591-8731

**City of Vancouver**  
 Mayor Larry Campbell and Council  
 453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4  
 Phone: 604 873-7273  
 Fax: 604 873-7750  
 mayorandcouncil@city.vancouver.bc.ca