

Issue 37

Summer 2008



Bike to Work Week
is May 26 to June 1,
2008.

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The Urbane Cyclist

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition Quarterly

www.vacc.bc.ca

Make cycling an integral part of the transportation culture of the Lower Mainland

Endorphins and Cycling: Riding High on Your Way to Work by Rob Brownie

It is common knowledge that you feel great after undertaking any form of strenuous exercise. Whether you run, swim, hike or cycle you are improving the overall health of your circulatory and respiratory systems while maintaining muscle tone and metabolic rate. Equally vital is the sense of wellbeing or euphoria that comes after a sustained period of activity, due in large part to the release of chemicals deep inside your brain. Endorphins are chemicals that are produced and released by the pituitary gland to help block pain sensations and relax the body when under stress. This explains why someone who has just suffered a severe injury can appear to be eerily calm or how a long distance runner can overcome pain and discomfort to finish a grueling marathon. Fortunately one does not have to go through such great extremes to achieve the benefits of endorphin release as anyone who cycles regularly can attest. Often referred to as a "runner's high", cyclists can achieve a similar rush when maintaining a relatively high heart rate for a sustained period of time. Coasting down hill just won't do it, nor will meandering your way to the corner store. If you really want a mood altering experience you would be better served riding at moderate speed for at least ten or fifteen minutes and preferably longer, as long as your heart rate is approaching 85% capacity. For most of us the best time to maximize our relaxation potential on a daily basis is when we commute to and from work and tend to be most stressed. Now you can even achieve an endorphin release by standing on the spot and rotating your outstretched arms 20 times in each direction but unless you have a home business, flapping your arms simply will not get you to work on time. Commuter cycling can improve your stamina, maintain your physical and mental health and perhaps even make you a better person to work with, at least in part, because you have willed your body to regulate itself.

The VACC "pitched in" to clean up Annacis Channel between Richmond and Delta On April 27th.

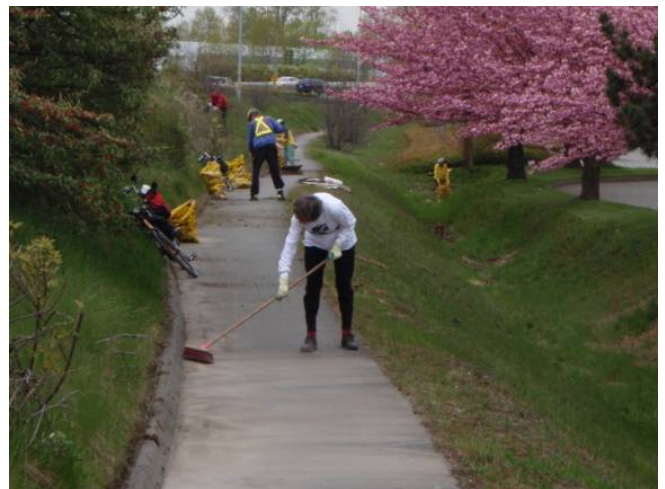


Photo: Marion Orser.

The Urbane Cyclist

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The views in this publication are not neces-
sarily those of the VACC

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MEET US

The VACC Board meetings are open to all
interested in bicycling in Greater Vancou-
ver. We generally meet on the second
Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
Phone **604 878-8222** for details.
info@vacc.bc.ca

INTERNET

Keep up on the latest cycling issues and
events. Join one of our e-mail lists at
www.vacc.bc.ca/lists

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

Submissions may be sent to:
The Urbane Cyclist:
newsletter@vacc.bc.ca

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

Next deadline: Friday, July 18, 2008

President's Report by Arno Schortinghuis

Hello fellow cyclists.

Isn't this is an exciting time for cyclists? Cycling is increasingly recognized as an efficient, non polluting, low greenhouse gas emitting, quiet and low cost form of transportation. Combine this with a growing awareness of the outstanding health benefits of exercise and the inescapable conclusion is that cycling is by far the best mode of transportation – for the rider, for the community and for the planet. And it's so enjoyable as well!

We recently held our annual AGM where we heard about all the work going on in our municipal committees and in our major programs. One director stepped down and we were fortunate to elect four new directors.

I wish to thank Marion Orser who has guided the direction of the VACC as a director from its inception in 1998. Marion has worked on numerous projects, including bikes on SkyTrain and more recently on the Pitt River Bridge. She has also worked hard on the New Westminster and Tri Cities committees. In recognition for her outstanding contributions, she was presented with an Outstanding Service Award.

I would like to welcome our new directors: Maricell Bongco, Amy Greenwood, Ken Ohrn and Heather Shay. Thanks also to our returning directors: Charlotte Bathurst, Jack Becker, Colin Brander, Rob Brownie, Luis Bernhardt, Erika Eineigel, John Fair, John Seinen. A special thanks to Maggie Wojtarowicz who has temporarily resigned from the Board but who has put in a huge amount of volunteer work and is now organizing our Strategic Planning session and is working on obtaining charitable status for the VACC. I am looking forward to working with this group of dedicated individuals during my term as president.

Hans Groen, who has worked hard in the Vancouver Committee on such projects as cycle facilities in Stanley Park, truck underrun protection and a VACC vision, was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award. Also recognized were Alexi Zawadzki for his work in the Tri-Cities Committee and Gordon Hall for his work in the Surrey Committee. Thanks go to Gordon Hobbs of Caps Bicycle Shop in Sapperton for donating a gift package for our Volunteer of the Year recipient.

Our municipal committees do the bulk of our advocacy work and we are grateful for the work of all those who attend the municipal committees and especially the committee chairs. Thanks to John Seinen who has stepped down as chair of the Tri-Cities Committee and to Jack Becker who has stepped down as chair of the Vancouver Committee after many years of service. Thanks also to committee chairs Andrew Feltham (New Westminster), John Fair (North Shore), Luis Goddyn (Burnaby), Alexi Zawadzki (Tri Cities), Gordon Hall (Surrey) and to Carol Vignale for starting up the Delta Committee. Thanks to Leslie Love for continuing to produce our excellent newsletter.

The VACC has seen a very rapid increase in the growth of our programs. Bonnie Fenton (Commuter Cycling Skills), Arthur Orsini (Cycling Training for the School Community) and Mia Kohout (Bike to Work) are taking their programs to new levels. Mia has obtained significant funding from the Province, Translink, Municipalities and companies which will allow us to deliver an expanded Bike to Work Week to most of Metro Vancouver.

Continued next page

The Urbane Cyclist

Continued from previous page

I am thrilled that the VACC has grown to such an extent that we were able to open an office and hire Jodi Peters as Administrative Assistant. This office will be very busy during May and June as BTWW and Com-muter Cycling Skills programs get into full swing.

The foundation of the VACC is based on our mem-bers. Each member supports and strengthens the organization. When we advocate for cycling facilities or ask for funding, we will have more impact if we can say that we have 3000 or even 10,000 members. It is now possible to purchase or renew a member-ship online at vacc.bc.ca. In order to boost our mem-bership I propose a positive epidemic, an idea I got from talking to Dr Fred Bass. If you are a VACC

member, I encourage you to infect two other cyclists by encouraging them to become VACC members. They should then be encouraged to infect two other cyclists. When this positive epidemic runs its course, we will have a significant increase in members and a stronger organization which will be more effective in fulfilling our mission of making cycling an integral part of the transportation culture.

As the Chinese Proverb says, "We live in interesting times". This is an interesting and exciting time for cyclists and cycling advocates. If we all work together at promoting cycling through encouragement, educa-tion and advocacy, there is no reason that we can't make cycling so inviting that it will be soon be every-one's first transportation choice.

Bike to Work Week Memories

Photos and Text by John Fair

He said he bought the tricycle after he had broken his hip and did not have good balance any more. He didn't tell me his exact age, but said he was in his mid 70's.



West Vancouver MLA Ralph Sultan, checking out the bus bike rack at our BTW Lions Gate Bridge station in 2006.

I met the owner of this recumbent tricycle at our 2006 BTW station at the north end of the ironworkers bridge. He said he had cycled from Ladner just for some exercise. I asked him how he got his bike on the tunnel shuttle. He said he didn't use the tunnel. Instead, he cycled over the Alex Fraser bridge.



Bike to Work for Access Justice By David Hay

My partners and I at Richards Buell Sutton LLP are proud to have again been asked to sponsor this year's Bike To Work Week. We regard this event as critically important to the cycling community and an essential introduction to the notion of riding to work as a necessary alternative to the deleterious grind of vehicular commuting.

This year we are pleased to offer something a little different to Bike To Work Week – a marriage of sorts. As I see it, there are two rockets ready to burst in the midnight sky. Meet the bride: the ever expanding awareness of bike commuting. And the groom: the general notion that all individuals, regardless of income, are entitled to effective access to justice. Together they make a fine couple.

Much ink has been spilled about the groom. Riding to work is a great emancipation from mental slavery. Indeed, to know that it is possible to get there without a car is truly liberating, and the journey itself healthy and uplifting.

The groom believes strongly that the legal protection of the bride depends on a knowledge of the law and access to it, regardless of economic circumstances. This principal is particularly important the cycling community. Many of us consider cycling a luxury. Others ride a bike out of economic necessity. When people of modest means run into legal problems, their challenges can be overwhelming.

I have been working to arrange the marriage with Mia Kohout and the Western Canada's Society to Access Justice. Mia needs no introduction. The WCSAJ is a non-profit society whose directors are volunteer lawyers dedicated to justice for those who cannot afford, it. The marriage will be a lawyers' ride to work during Bike To Work Week. The so-called "Bike to Work for Access Justice" will take place Thursday, May 29, 2008 and include a symbolic ride from the Vancouver Public Library (Main Branch) to the southeast corner of the Law Courts. All proceeds will benefit Western Canada's Society to Access Justice initiatives.

To increase the profile of the event, we have obtained special permission from the Law Society to wear our gowns. The ride is not open only to lawyers (which is one of the points the ride is making) and anyone interested in joining the ride can obtain details at www.accessjustice.ca.

The founder of the WCSAJ, Dugald Christie, was killed by a van on his bike in July 2006 while riding across Canada to raise awareness of the shortcomings of legal assistance programs in Canada. Dugald would have loved to have been invited to this wedding.

True Riding, David Hay—bike lawyer.

David W. Hay is a litigation lawyer and partner at Richards Buell Sutton, LLP. Richards Buell Sutton, LLP is a full service downtown Vancouver law firm delivering legal advice and solutions in all areas of practice. Anyone seeking legal advice should call David Hay directly at 604-661-9250 or send an email to dhay@rbs.ca

MEET YOUR BOARD

MEMBERS



Rob Brownie

Rob is an elementary teacher in a Vancouver Montessori school. He has degrees in Philosophy and Urban Geography. Rob has an interest in writing and has coauthored a number of articles on art and architecture in Vancouver.

Rob has been an avid commuter cyclist for the past 25 years and has been involved in various advocacy groups focusing on issues ranging from the politics of food to developing community based strategies to tackle climate change. He is committed to working towards the expansion of the Lower Mainland's bike route system.

Teaching the Teachers to Ride By Talia Fanning

Teachers who ride bicycles to get to work:

- Improve their own health by fitting exercise into their schedules
- Set a positive example for the children in their care
- Reduce CO₂ emissions into the air, especially near school zones
- All of the above

Rosalind Kellett and the recently established School Bike Advisory Committee are bringing a voice for cycling to the Vancouver School Board because encouraging teachers to ride bicycles has numerous benefits to themselves and society.

"[The city bike committee has] enough on their agenda without the schools popping in saying "hey, how about schools, how about schools?" They're busy sorting out where to put the bike lanes, and safe places for turning left on Cambie Street. So I thought, we really need a separate committee that deals with the schools." More bikes, and fewer cars, will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and teachers on bikes, encouraging the students, will help reduce class time delays.

"There are [students] who come from False Creek, who annoy me because they're always late. They protest that it's the buses, but I always think, 'If you had a bike, you could be here and not worry about the buses.'"

Her solution: lead by example.

Eric Hamber Secondary School, where Kellett works, is one of the first schools to take advantage of the VACC Cycling Training for the School Community program. In recognition of the contributions made to society by role models like teachers, the course is taught on a paid Professional Development day.

The courses are available to schools across Metro Vancouver. The first session, a full day of information, covers bike routes, equipment, and safe, confident cycling. The second session – 2-3 hours – covers bike education and activities, mapping exercises and resources to help teacher integrate cycling and active transportation ideas in their school. These are skills and resources that Kellett hopes to see put into practice.

"I want to see if some of the teachers, at the end of it, go get a bike and start riding to school. If it leads to a student bike club, or to a group of teachers who were interested in promoting cycling, that would be a success."

For more information about CTSC courses, please email schools@vacc.bc.ca



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The Urbane Cyclist

Do you feel like a beneficiary of the VACC?

During one conference, the question was asked: How many of you have donated money to a nonprofit sometime in the last year? About 2/3 of 200 people raised their hands. And how many of you have volunteered for a nonprofit sometime in the last year? About 4/5 raised their hands. And how many of you have been beneficiaries of a nonprofit in the last year? Only eight.

Then it was pointed out that many in the audience have a parent who had been in a nonprofit hospital, had attended a nonprofit music concert, or had a son in a nonprofit soccer league. In addition, many in the group were simply alive because Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Consumers Union have lowered car accident fatalities. Many owe their jobs to prior work done by activists for civil rights and women's rights. All were breathing cleaner air that day because of environmental activists. When asked again, 100% smilingly raised their hands.

With thanks to our friends at Board Café.



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Better Environmentally Sound Transportation's Bike Valet

Inspired by the wildly successful valet bicycle parking in San Francisco, over the last two years BEST has run Bike Valet in Vancouver with great results. Concert-goers in Deer Lake Park, fans of the Vancouver Canadians, and families spending the day at community events have had their bicycles parked conveniently and stored safely while they enjoyed themselves worry-free. This year, BEST is expanding Bike Valet to serve even more events, park more bikes, and make traveling on two wheels throughout Metro Vancouver even easier.

Bike Valet is like a coat check for your bike. Patrons will sign a claim check and give us their bike. We provide them with a stub. After the event, patrons return the stub and we give them their bike back. It's that easy.

Look for Bike Valet at events throughout Metro Vancouver during Spring/Summer 2008.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities, volunteering, or bringing Bike Valet to your event contact Cameron at 604.669.2860 or cam@best.bc.ca

BEST would like to recognize TransLink and the City of Vancouver for their support.



Commuter Challenge

June 2nd to 6th, 2008

The Commuter Challenge is an annual, nation-wide campaign to raise awareness about transportation options and promote friendly competition among local organizations. Businesses and individuals participating in the event will pledge to use a cleaner mode of transportation at least once for their commute to work during the first week of June. The individuals that excel in their commitment to sustainable commuting habits will be rewarded with great prizes. This will be our 13th year promoting transportation alternatives such as cycling, walking, taking transit, tele-working and car/vanpooling to the hundreds of thousands of individuals in Metro Vancouver.

Over 100 businesses and 40,000 employees took part in 2007. This year, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) wants your organization to help us have the highest Commuter Challenge participation in Canada. Residents of Metro Vancouver value our region's clean air and an active lifestyle – it's time to prove exactly that. We want to make this as fun and easy as possible, so BEST will provide your organization with the tools you need to make a change for the better.

For more information about registration or sponsorship opportunities contact Cameron at 604.669.2860 or cam@best.bc.ca

BEST would like to recognize TransLink and BC Transmission Corporation for their support for this event. Prizes provided by Steve Nash Sports Club, Beauty in Motion, Arc'Teryx, Pacific Cinematheque, Capilano Suspension Bridge, My Living Canvass... and more to come.

Bike To Work Week is for Anyone and Everyone by Talia Fanning

What do a trail-riding unicyclist, a family guy, and an Austrian with a big jar of change have in common? Surprisingly, two things: They all work for Electronic Arts, in Burnaby; and they all have good reasons to bike to work.

In 2007, the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC) Bike to Work Week event had more than 3,500 registered participants, from businesses all over the Lower Mainland. EA's team was by far the largest, with 64 members, and throughout the week, participants saved 33 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being emitted.

Marcel Kuhn hadn't been on a bike in over 20 years when he saw the notices at EA that Bike to Work Week was coming up. His co-worker had recently bought a hybrid car and he was feeling pressured to do something equally environmental, but a new car wasn't in the budget.

"I collect all my change through the year," he explains. "At the end, I have \$600 or \$700, so I always buy something. Last year, I bought a bike."

Kuhn lives on the North Shore, and his 12 km ride over the Iron Workers Bridge to Burnaby takes about 45 minutes - more than twice as long as driving - but he says once he got over the first hurdles, it was all downhill.

"I was pretty discouraged the first time I tried it, because there are a lot of hills in North Van, I had to get off my bike to push about four times, but then every day was better and better."

Ryan Hietanen agrees. He started biking to work so that he and his wife could get rid of one of their cars, which he says saved them about \$300 a month.

"The hardest part was getting used to the bike seat," he laughs. "My butt was pretty sore, but the gear makes a big difference."

Hietanen's equipment makes a difference, but Yggy King's cycle is one that brings children running to the school-yard fence when he goes by. The senior software engineer says, while impractical, one wheel can be better than two.

"Unicycling, I'm definitely in a good mood. You have to be more focused, to keep balanced, but it clears your head."

Whatever your riding style, experience level, or reasons, Bike to Work Week is open to everyone. Sign up your workplace and get out there.

Bike to Work Week registration opens mid-April and takes place from May 26th to June 1st. For more information, visit www.vacc.bc.ca/biketowork

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For more information, or to schedule an interview with Mia Kohout, please contact Talia Fanning, at 778.847.4992, or by email, at tfanning@vacc.bc.ca

*Dana Putman
(see article next page)
Photo: Sylvia McFadden*



Commuter Cyclist Enjoys the Long Uphill Battle

by Talia Fanning

VPL Pedal Pusher Urges Vancouverites to Consider Biking to Work

Dana Putnam has five reasons not to cycle to her job at the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) downtown branch. The heavy-set, 41 year-old, mother of one, lives on the last street in the city, at Fraser Lands, and owns a car.

And yet, several days a week, she does the 11.6 km commute on the seat of a revamped, 20 year old, touring bike.

"It's fun," she insists. "Cycling has its own rewards."

Rewards like better health, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and, thanks to her efforts at her workplace, a sense of community for the employees of the library who choose to bike to work.

Last year, for the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC)'s first annual Lower Mainland-wide Bike to Work Week, Putnam organized a team of 32 of her co-workers to register for the program. Together, the team commuted almost 1,500 km in seven days, saving 0.3 tonnes of GHG emissions.

After the event, Putnam says she wanted to do more.

"I really liked the feeling it created," she explained. "Instead of just passing each other in the bike room, we became known to each other."

To maintain the sense of community, Putnam initiated Pedal Pushers, a year-round commuter cyclists' group at the VPL.

Not that year-round necessarily means cycling everyday.

"I wouldn't say I'm a fair-weather cyclist," she explains, "but I don't like to bike when it's cold, and I don't bike in the rain... It's a long ride, and the ride home is harder."

After a nine-hour workday, the up-hill ride can be overwhelming, and Putnam admits that she sometimes takes the Skytrain part of the way.

"It makes it more manageable," she says. And that, she thinks, is the key.

"I guess, probably the biggest thing was just wondering if it was possible, for me. I thought about it for a long time before I got on my bike.

"I'm an unlikely candidate for cycling, but I saw other people cycling to work and I liked what I saw.

"A lot of people get hung up, thinking that you have to be jock to do this. They think you need all the gear, and the doodads, but you don't. All you need is a bike that rolls, and a helmet."

With the initiation of the Pedal Pushers bike group, and last year's success at Bike to Work Week, Putnam hopes to have even more biking bibliophiles in 2008.

"Last year, we had about 9% [of library employees], officially, but there were several people who didn't register, who did cycle, so we could have been at 11, or 12%. That's really neat. This year, I'm aiming for 15%."



Hints and Suggestions from Fellow Cyclists

"There is a great website for those rides when you can't figure out the rain situation.

www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/radar/index

It shows the current rain in the Lower Mainland and even a motion image so you can see how the rain is developing. Sometimes I wait a 1/2 hour for a break (on days when there is a chance) and then go for it.

The other thing is contacts for road maintenance. I fax the contact. It's way tougher for them to ignore paper than a voicemail or conversation.

Provincial Highway Maintenance: Mainroad @ 604.904.1218

For your local municipality, fax the maintenance Department or failing that, the engineering department."

Dave Rush, Maple Ridge.

Bike to Work Metro Vancouver 2008

The VACC offers three on-site workplace workshops adaptable to the unique demands of your workplace.

'Lunch Hour Bike to Work Primer' (1 hour) Max. 20 participants. Cost \$195

This workshop is designed to provide tips to get your workplace ready for Bike to Work Week. This workshop also provides support and guidance for employees in your workplace that have thought about biking to work, but who just need that extra little push to try it.

Trained workshop leaders present on such topics as route planning, bike buddies, wardrobe and Bike to Work team-building. TransLink bike maps and other resources are available free to workshop participants. This is a great way for your workplace to support the Bike to Work program and to increase the number of employees in your workplace that bike to work.

'An Introduction to Commuter Cycling Skills' (2 hours) Max. 20 participants. Cost \$245

This 2-hour workshop provides classroom training on the rules of the road for cyclists, and teaches participants the necessary skills to cycle in traffic. The focus is upon establishing awareness of safe cycling practices and building the knowledge necessary to ride a bicycle safely and confidently in traffic. This is an introductory workshop, and covers much of the classroom component of the full day commuter cycling skills course.

'Commuter Cycling Skills Course' (7 ½ hours) Max. 12 participants. Cost \$800

This one-day course is comprised of in-class, parking lot, and on-road training, with a 10-12 km ride to demonstrate and practise skills.

Participants learn about the most common situations faced when riding in traffic and are provided with tips to make cycle commuting a fun and regular part of their lives. They learn to:

- ride safely and confidently in traffic
- check their bike for safety
- adjust their bike to fit them
- ride at night and in the rain
- choose equipment and clothing
- plan the best routes

This course made a big difference for me. Prior to it, I had been on a bike about 5 times in the last 15 years, mainly because I was absolutely terrified not only of traffic, but also of all other road users. I never thought I would dare sharing the road with cars, busses, etc. I now bike to work at least twice a week and find it very enjoyable. I would recommend this course to anyone, and I think it also made me not only a better cyclist, but also a better driver and pedestrian!- Pam from Vancouver

Your Friendly Neighbourhood Cargo Bike Co-op by Zoey Peterson

This last February, our community lost a tireless activist and cherished friend—Isobel Kiborn. Since her sudden passing, a group of Isobel's friends have been looking for a fitting way to pay tribute to her spirit of environmental activism, cooperative living, and community building. And thus the Cargo Bike Co-op was born.

The Plan

Have you ever had to transport something that was too big to carry on your bike? Well, that's where the cargo bike co-op comes in. Our plan is to raise some money and buy a small fleet of cargo bikes, cargo trikes, and trailers and make them available for people to borrow whenever they need to them. It's that simple—grassroots, non-profit, self-propelled.

Raising the Money

In July, every tax-paying British Columbian will be receiving a \$100 'green rebate' cheque in the mail, ostensibly to allow them to make individual lifestyle changes to reduce their own carbon footprint. The actual impact of all those little \$100 cheques being scattered to the winds is pretty trivial compared with the impact the same money could have with collective action. With this in mind, we've set up a bank account where people can put their 'green rebate' toward just this sort of collective action—buying cargo bikes for the community to share. Donations can be made to the Isobel Kiborn Legacy Project, Vancity Plan 24 Savings Account, 400390 Branch 9.

What's Next

At this early stage, there is still a lot to figure out. What kinds of bikes? Where can they be stationed? We have a lot of ideas, but we're counting on your input and feedback! If you're at all interested in having access to cargo bikes, please take a few minutes to fill out our on-line survey at the website below. There's also a blog where you can follow our progress, and a mailing list for important updates.

www.cargobikecoop.org

info@cargobikecoop.org

Work with the VACC

To become involved, please contact:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | Luis 604 431-6658 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delta | Carol 604 943-3412 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Tri-Cities | John 604 469-0361 |

Did you know...?

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

Who to write about issues in The Urbane Cyclist:

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Phone: 604 453-4500
Fax: 604 453-4626
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The Urbane Cyclist



Cycling through tea plantations in southern India Photo: John O'Connor

Please mail this form and a cheque to:

VACC Memberships: City Square, P.O. Box 47068, 15-555 West 12th Ave., Vancouver BC V5Z 4L6

Make cheques payable to: **Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition**

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| Joint membership with BC Cycling Coalition (additional per person) | \$5 | |
| Corporate/Organization | \$100 | |
| Additional Donation (sorry we can't provide tax receipts) | \$ | |
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