

CHAIN MAIL



The Citizens for Safe Cycling Newsletter

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Fred Does
Ch'ang-won

by Fred T. Perel

Fred, a long-time member of CfSC, recently spent some time in Korea. Here is part of his story.

Hello fellow Ottawa cyclists:

How's the off season in Ottawa right now? Are you relaxing? Cross country skiing? Reminiscing about last season? It's taking me a while to get used to the lifestyle way over here, but the weather in my new hometown of Ch'ang-won, South Korea is a perky 10 degrees Celsius. Last week, I acquired an old bike from a kid who hardly ever uses it. Therefore, it was in fine condition.

Unfortunately, it's only a fixed gear bike. Although that style is popular with a lot of couriers, I have been pampered with the benefits of shifting for ages. It's a good thing that Ch'ang-won does not have that many hills. On Wednesday, I had a four hour lunch break. That meant riding my bike for the first time outside North America. I was very excited! I was in such a good

mood once I took my bike out of my place, that I was singing in the streets. Koreans like to sing because it is stress relieving. However, seeing a non-Korean sing while riding a bicycle raised some peculiar attention on the streets. I was saying to the pedestrians and the motorists "Hey! Look at me! I'm riding my bicycle and Ch'ang-Won is the place to be!" The locals couldn't believe their eyes. When I first arrived here, a few people showed me around the city (population of half a million), but I now decided to explore and to ride the streets. The residential neighbourhood streets are too narrow for a car and a bike to go through. Many are one lane streets with traffic going in both directions. I boldly told a motorist that it's my turn to go through because I got here first. Then the fun part, going on the busy roads.

In Ottawa, many cyclists would like to have bike paths running along the major streets, thus protecting them from traffic. Well, that's what they have in Ch'ang-won. But guess what? I stayed on the rapid five lane road.
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Member Survey
Extended to March 22

CfSC still wants YOU to tell us where to go! You can easily fill out the survey on our web site at www.CfSC.ottawa.on.ca/survey/ All members who complete their survey on the web will be entered into a draw to win a copy of "Effective Cycling" by John Forester.

Call for Candidates
Regional Cycling
Advisory Group

Join the movement towards better bicycling in Ottawa-Carleton! The Region's cycling advisory group needs volunteer members who can spend one to two evenings per month throughout 2000. Help this group of committed cyclists to improve conditions and build new facilities. Have input into Regional plans, priorities and programmes. For information please call Robin Bennett at 560-6001 extension 2723.

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Citizens for Safe Cycling

the non-profit association which promotes cycling as a viable means of transportation in the Ottawa-Carleton region by advocating:

- Acceptance of the responsible cyclist as a legitimate road user;
- Education of all cyclists to improve riding and traffic skills, and of other road users to accommodate cyclist traffic as part of their normal driving skills;
- Improved Engineering to facilitate cyclist traffic, such as proper traffic control systems, adequate lane width, and sufficient parking;
- Legislation that is effective and enforced; and
- Representation of cycling issues to all levels of government

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CfSC needs volunteers and members in order to do an effective job. Please call Sylvia Welke if you would like to volunteer for any Cycling Safety and Promotion activity.

Call 722-4454 to volunteer for advocacy work.

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Ewen Todd
Jan. 2000
Volunteer of the Month



Ewen Todd leads by example as one of the region's most dedicated cyclists. On all but the snowiest and iciest days of the year he can be seen riding to work at Tunney's Pasture where he works as a senior scientist, from his home 10 km away. He hasn't been afraid to hop on his bike in his suit and tie to get to an important business meeting, to set an example for others of the practicality of bicycle transportation.

For two years Ewen has served as CfSC's financial reviewer. He recently gave his "stamp of approval" to CfSC's financial statements after a meticulous review. Bringing with him the experience of a treasurer of the Professional Institute of the Public Service (PIPS), Ewen even helped to debug a small but mysterious glitch in the numbers. Ewen's signature on the financial statements is solid reassurance to CfSC members and funders that the

statements accurately represent CfSC's financial transactions. While financial review is a largely unglamorous and invisible task, it's also demanding and essential. Without it CfSC could not obtain extensive funding to promote bicycle use and cycling safety.

Working as the leader of CfSC's delegation, Ewen helped convince city staff and politicians to create the Nepean Cycling advisory committee in 1991. As CfSC's representative and a volunteer on the Nepean Cycling Committee, he has participated in many activities including the Nepean Days cycling promotion booth and dozens of committee meetings. Following Ewen's suggestion and initiative, the first joint meeting of area cycling committees was organized in the spring of 2000.

Even prior to the establishment of the Nepean committee Ewen helped persuade Nepean city councillors to provide the first-ever paved shoulders for cycling in the Region, on Highway 16. In fact Ewen's contributions go back to the very founding of CfSC and the four years he served as its second president. From convincing Ottawa City staff to establish the Ottawa Cycling Advisory Group (OCAG), to reviewing road plans to ensure they considered cyclists, (well before any municipal cycling committee or staff existed to do this), to volunteering for helmet promotion and safety campaigns, Ewen has contributed to better cycling in many notable ways.

Changes at CfSC

Robert Meynell, new director, and his philosophy of cycling



Since I traded in my Big Wheel for a bicycle, cycling has been my principal means of transportation. What I first saw as a limitation placed on me because I was below the legal driving age became an expression of my liberty; after a year of enjoying my driver's license I chose never to own a car primarily for environmental reasons, but also because I simply prefer cycling.

I grew up in metro Toronto and studied in Montreal and Nova Scotia. For a year I worked as a volunteer in the northern Yukon. Since September 1998, I have been living in Ottawa where I am pursuing a doctorate in political science at the University of Ottawa. I am a resident of Sandy Hill.

My interest in being an active volunteer for an organization that

promotes and advocates cycling stems in part from my various frustrations with car oriented city streets and also from my desire to make a positive contribution to a cause that has both local and global significance. I believe that a widespread cycling `velorution` could have an enormous and beneficial impact on the environment, human health and the quality of urban life. Every time someone chooses a bike over a car they participate in the movement toward a cleaner, safer, quieter and more cost effective urban environment

Sylvia Welke, our new coordinator, answers the question "What about Sylvia?"



I hail from Ottawa originally, where I went to high school and returned to for various work terms from the University of Waterloo. Then I heeded a call to the west and ended up doing a M.Sc. at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. After grad school, I made the southern

interior of BC my home and have been working in the ecological agriculture and forestry field.

During that time, I have volunteered with various community groups and was moving towards also making my full time work more community and issue oriented. Naturally, I was tickled when this opportunity presented itself in Ottawa, since I strongly support CfSC's mission as an avid bike commuter and it also gave me an excuse to come back to Ottawa to be with my family.

Now to my biking history. In my travels across much of Canada, I have been a bike commuter in several major central/western Canadian cities - Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Ottawa. I have always opted for biking in urban centres and have encouraged others to consider cycling as their mode of transport in cities. As I biked through these cities, I was keenly aware of the issues facing cyclists, the unconverted and motorists. Finally, I have an opportunity to address some of these. So, with my unusual background, my passion for cycling and my enthusiasm for community work I am looking forward to contributing to the CfSC cause as Cycling Safety and Promotion coordinator.

Grant Malinsky on Board

In a late-breaking development, *ChainMail* has learned that Grant Malinsky is the newest director on the Board of CfSC. Welcome Grant. We hope to have your picture and biography in the next edition. Also in the next edition we hope to have the picture and bio of Vice-President Brian Martin.

The Roger Horner Story



Growing up just outside of Vancouver, BC, my parents encouraged and helped me to learn how to cycle as a child. We would often go on short rides together, using it as a form of transportation when we didn't have to travel very far. As I got older I would regularly go on rides with my friends when we wanted to go swimming or to the mall. By the time I was a student at the University of Victoria, cycling had become my main mode of transportation, both for environmental and health reasons. In my later years at

U.Vic. I became involved with the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition, helping out with their "Rails with Trails" programme.

After I graduated with my degree in Electrical Engineering in 1993, I moved to Ottawa where I had done several co-op work terms. I continued to use my bicycle as my main form of transportation, cycling all over the city. That summer I took the CAN-Bike II course through the CfSC which increased my skills and confidence even further. It was around this time that I met my wife Julie, so I decided to accept a permanent job offer.

A few months ago Brett asked if I would be interested in becoming an interim board member for the CfSC. After attending a board meeting I decided to accept his offer because I wanted to make a difference for cyclists in the Ottawa area. I am looking forward to serving you over the next year.

Fred, continued from page 1
Some of the motorists didn't like it, because it's uncommon for cyclists to use that road. But tough luck! I was determined to exercise my right as a viable user of the road, even if the lanes weren't wide enough to fit a bicycle and a vehicle.

The bus drivers are very compliant here. These drivers didn't squeeze me into the bus

stop. When the buses stopped, they gave me plenty of room to pass before the passengers boarded. So I thanked the bus drivers and kept on singing to everyone.

I would like to note that I was not wearing a helmet. After being so compliant to North American standards, I had forgotten how much of a pleasure it was to have the breeze going through my vivacious hair. The most challenging part was cycling through the city's massive interlinking rotary. It had to have at least seven lanes going in multiple directions. It was virtually impossible to read as the lanes discontinued at every intersection. Using my vaunted Can-Bike skills, I used my visible hand signals. Although these motorists aren't used to seeing a bicycle on the major streets, they were able to read sign language and the cars gave me the space that I needed to change lanes. Damn it felt good. Just like anywhere else, riding a bicycle gives you the freedom to go wherever you'd like, and Ch'ang-won is no exception.

The moral of the story is that bicycles rule, period! No matter where you are in the world. This ain't Rogers Cable, but a public service announcement from yours truly. I expect you all to be on your bicycles soon, JUST LIKE ME!

New at the Region



RMOC Mobility Management Unit staff (left to right): Natalie Tasker (Traffic Calming), Robin Bennett (Cycling and Pedestrian), Ryan Lanyon (Transportation Demand Management), Geoff Noxon (Manager)

Ryan Lanyon changes jobs but not interests

Ryan recently resigned as CfSC Coordinator to work for the Region. He was interviewed by Agnes Davis.

1. *What is your new job title?*

While I do not have a true job title, I work on and coordinate 'Transportation Demand Management Programs'.

2. *What projects will you be working on in your new position?*

There are a number of projects I will be involved in, through a

variety of approaches, but the general theme is that of educating and encouraging people to think about their transportation habits. Specifically, how they might adopt or increase walking, cycling, public transit, carpooling and other options into their travel patterns. The first major initiative will be a comprehensive website about transportation choices - keep an eye out for its release in the spring!

3. *What did you learn at CfSC that will be useful in your new job?*

Two very important things:

1. While bike lanes look neat and organized, they are not always the best design solution for cyclists.
2. This city could be covered in bicycle facilities but they would be of little value without encouragement, enforcement, and education.

4. *In getting people out of their cars for their trips, what trips are most applicable for bicycling. What trips, if any, do you think bicycle use should be discouraged?*

I think any trip within the city is applicable for bicycling. With Rack & Roll, trips right across the Region are also fairly easy to make. The decision to use a bicycle really depends on the potential cyclist's comfort level, education, skills and options. Luckily, those can all be increased.

There are only two types of trips I would discourage using a bicycle for:

1. To destinations where it is faster and more convenient to walk. 2. Trips that require carrying goods when the cyclist is ill-equipped to handle the load (i.e. bags on handlebars). It's easier and safer to walk or use a backpack, panniers or trailer.

5. *What ways do you think citizens groups such as CfSC and neighbourhood community associations can best continue to encourage trips to be made by other than auto?*

CfSC does a great job encouraging bicycle trips by providing skills instruction and confidence building. Community groups, including CfSC, have also been instrumental in promoting the bicycle as a viable and legitimate form of transportation - it's not a toy for the kids anymore.

6. *Do you own and use a car? How do you travel to work? to shop? for other trips? How has*

your personal experience helped prepare you for this job?

When I moved to Ottawa from rural Niagara Falls, I felt sad that I was leaving my car behind, but I knew I couldn't afford it. I haven't looked back since. Living in Centretown, I walk almost everywhere. When I need to get somewhere a bit faster, or have a few destinations to get to, I ride my bicycle and occasionally take the bus.

I consider each trip to be an auto-free challenge, and feel satisfied when I get somewhere without using a car. While I recognize not everyone wants to live like that, it does give me a good sense of the practicality of using 'alternative' modes, as well as some of the barriers that need to be addressed or removed.

7. *I seem to remember that your degree is in urban geography or planning. In what ways does your academic background prepare you for your new position?*

My degree is in directed interdisciplinary studies, focussing on urban studies. It gave me the flexibility to study a variety of perspectives on our urban environment, and especially its transportation system. Some of my courses included transportation engineering and planning, population studies, feminist

perspectives of the city, and real estate development.

Robin Bennett, the Region's new Cycling and Pedestrian Coordinator

by Frances Tanner

With only a month to get used to Ottawa, and to being a bureaucrat, Robin Bennett, the Region's new cycling and pedestrian coordinator, is still having pronoun trouble. He keeps calling cycling advocates "we" instead of "you."

"The biggest challenge is raising the education level and the concept of cycling as a means of transportation, for both cyclists and motorists," says Bennett. And for fellow planners. "Things are built too big and too far apart. Having residential areas so separate from job-generation locations is not great for trips for work or retail or education." As trips increase past ten miles, it becomes far harder to encourage people to make them by bicycle.

Fortunately, he sees some movement towards considering pedestrians and cyclists at the design stage, thanks to the political support expressed in the Region's 1997 Official Plan. "At least I see it trying to shift. They still have to work against market forces and it's really hard to change what people think they want."

Market forces have kept Bennett mostly in a car since he moved here from Markham in January. "I couldn't find an apartment in Ottawa, there's a pretty low vacancy rate," so he's been carpooling from Crysler. By March he'll be in a Westboro apartment a short walk from the Transitway, and is open to instruction on the best cycle route to downtown from there.

"I do feel safer on bike lanes myself, but I also do recognize the difference between feeling safer and being safer. I suspect bike lanes are more appropriate where there are not a lot of intersections, for example on higher speed arterials in the suburbs. And if a bike lane is substandard in width or surface, then it's quite dangerous."

Feel free to educate Bennett: "I'm in learning mode here. Be sure I'll be taking the first available Can-Bike Course!"

Cycling is where Bennett will spend most of his time, while "keeping an eye" on pedestrian issues. He has been plunged into the design issues around the corner of Rideau and Elgin, where a new Sports Hall of Fame has been proposed. There's potential in this redesign for things to get either a lot better or a lot worse for pedestrians and cyclists, so Bennett hopes that "there will be a lot of expert advocates watching it very closely."

At the reconstruction stage this year is Blair Road, while detailed designs should be in the works for Cedarview, West Hunt Club and Scott Street. Altogether there are about 50 projects on the list to improve linkages in the bicycle network, and Bennett regrets that there are only funds for a few.

A general issue on the Region's workplan is to come up with guidelines for right turn "channelization design," again an opportunity to make things easier or harder for the green modes of transportation.

Bennett will also be working on the updated regional cyclists' guide map and collaborating with the City of Ottawa on their bicycle resource guide. "I'm trying to develop a database of all cycling facilities in the region but this is long term. I'll just get it started during my mandate."

There are definite opportunities in the upcoming amalgamation into one city. For his own job, Bennett notes, sidewalks are not yet under Regional jurisdiction. For the wider cycling community, he thinks it's critical to pay attention to getting structures in place for citizen participation.

"I place a lot of value on the volunteer sector, that's where I come from. The new city must have a mechanism that supports and values advisory groups and makes it easier to do their work." He urges full attendance at a

March 8th meeting hosted by the Nepean CAG at Nepean City Hall, "to move us forward on thinking what we can do with amalgamation."

There's that "we" again. "Well, I'm coming from being a bicycle advocate," says Bennett. "This is the first time I've worked for the public sector. I want to do a good job and see a great system here for bikes."

Geoff Noxon prepares to Manage Mobility

by Frances Tanner

Geoff Noxon, the leader of the Region's new Mobility Management Branch, is feeling energized these days. "Now that I have some staff, there are some very clear opportunities, some of which we've made progress on already."

The Regional Cycling Advisory Group is central to taking advantage of these opportunities, and Noxon encourages cyclists to join. There will be an advertisement in local media soon calling for new members. "There's quite a workload and if it's spread around, it's more fun," he says.

"In the traditional areas, we have a Cycling Facilities Improvement Program (CFIP) with a budget we'll try to spend as best possible, working with an RCAG subcommittee on their priorities," says Noxon. Within CFIP, "I'd like to see a balance

between design and building. If we have some designs on the shelf ready to go, we can quickly take advantage of any new funds such as another federal infrastructure project. And of course, we continue to give input on existing projects so that whatever is done is supportive of cycling."

Where the branch can really spend more time now is on the promotion side, which has two main prongs: a major promotion of cycling to the general public, and "reaching out to employers to promote all the alternatives to commuting by car."

Promotion activities include a "significant overhaul" of the cycling guide map. With its wealth of tips as well as up-to-date routes, "it's very valued not just by the converted but also by beginners who would never have tried cycling to work if they hadn't seen a route."

The second big promotion activity is to cooperate with the City of Ottawa to develop and distribute a catalogue of cycling activities and resources to every household in the Region, "a high quality keeper document that will provide a lot of hard information."

An innovation for both the public and employers will be the transportation demand management (TDM) website which will be "a portal for sustainable transportation: practical information on all the

alternative modes as well as responsible car use. It will be engaging and it can be so much more detailed, with sample flyers, posters and surveys."

Particularly for high tech companies whose employees are youthful, health conscious and environmentally conscious, Noxon thinks cycling will be a good sell. To help beginners feel safe on the road, the Branch will be encouraging employers to contact CfSC to purchase Can-Bike training courses for their employees.

Help is also on the way from OC Transpo, which will be expanding its popular Rack and Roll bike racks to every articulated bus, including routes 2, 7, 85, 95 and 180. "This really serves people who have a longer trip and is much more convenient than either mode on their own."

Why emphasize commuting when cycling could also replace some of the other car trips, which may be as much as 75% of all car use?

"In the first place, working with employers lets us leverage some of their resources to reach the public. They have good avenues of communication with employees," points out Noxon. Besides, work trips are peak-hour trips. "Car commuting creates the most demand for more roads," which is what creates an expensive crunch for the Region.

How will the Mobility Management Branch know if

they have succeeded in increasing cycling and reducing car use?

"Travel patterns are very difficult to measure," admits Noxon. "We take surveys at each intersection every summer, but you don't do the same intersection on the same day the next year. How you aggregate that information to get a reliable trend is a question. The origin-destination survey every ten years provides a long term yardstick. It is quite reliable but it's very expensive to do and can take several years to milk the survey for all the information in it. I really don't know if Council would support surveying more often."

Instead, the Branch will measure how many guide maps they put out, how many people report keeping and using the maps and the "Ultimate Ottawa Bike Guide," OC Transpo Rack and Roll usage and employers' reports of how many more bikes there are in their bike racks and how many fewer cars in their parking lots.

"The long term changes we're seeking are cultural, psychological, social," points out Noxon. There are many barriers to changing behaviour even once you've changed attitudes and given people good information.

Two ways CfSC cyclists can help:

First, consider joining RCAG or helping out with its workplan.

Second, get out there and ride your bike. "I'd love to see people out there riding in a manner which sets a good example and encouraging others to try cycling to work or school for the first time. The personal contact is the most important factor in persuading others. I know one man who was the only commuter cyclist on his block when he moved in. Now there are six and he converted them."

"Be proud!" says Noxon, himself an evangelical pedestrian. "Cycling is no longer eccentric or weird. People admire you for taking on the travel conditions. Cyclists can take credit for that change in attitude and you can just keep doing it."

Squeaky Wheel

by Brett Delmage, CfSC President

Writing this column is one of my most difficult tasks, as any Chain Mail editor who has waited...for my columns could tell you. I'm issuing a year's worth of apologies (Sorry Phil!) in advance to our new editor, Phil Shea, who I welcome to our team of dedicated volunteers with this issue.

After playing a lead role organizing the Harvest Ride and Ride for Cycling, Phil saw the call for Chain Mail editor and offered to wear the (BIG) shoes. He didn't have a computer but he had persistence and a record as long as your arm... leading to recognition as September 1999 Volunteer of the month! Thanks to your membership support and donations, CfSC was able to purchase a computer system so his talents could be put to good use.

Now, it's up to you. We have the tools and the talent, but Phil can't write Chain Mail by himself. Please contact him with your tales, essays, cartoons, cycling jokes, photos and reports for the next issue. It's your newsletter -- not a TV.

In January our Cycling Safety and Promotion Coordinator, Ryan Lanyon, left CfSC for

another exciting job. He's now working in the new Mobility Management Unit in Regional Transportation to work on the bigger picture of promoting travel by modes other than private car. (see interview, page 5). This work follows naturally from the excellent work last year on the OC Transpo Rack and Roll (bikes on buses) project steering committee, where he worked to make bike and bus travel more convenient.

We saw Ryan off to his new job a few blocks down the street with mixed emotions. The activation of the Mobility Management Unit and the loss of CfSC's first staff person to it (but hopefully last!) is solid evidence that years of letter writing, phone calls, meetings, participation in official plan and transportation policy reviews, work on cycling committees and just plain riding our bikes and helping others to do so, has made a difference. We wish Ryan and his colleagues a very good year building on CfSC's foundations.

We plan to have a lively party in the spring to thank Ryan for his contributions and to introduce and welcome our new Coordinator, Sylvia Welke. I hope that you will join us. It promises to be a fun and enlightening event. Watch the CfSC web site (www.CfSC.ottawa.on.ca) and mail list for details.

CfSC and the Future

Amalgamation and Us

by Alayne McGregor

CfSC members will have to be watching carefully in the next few months to ensure that the new amalgamated City of Ottawa will still support green modes.

When the new city starts up next January 1, not only will there be a new government structure in place, but the city's basic policies and programs will all be under review.

The new city will have to have a new Official Plan, which will determine its basic policies. If we are lucky, the transition team will simply take the current RMOC Official Plan and add in the Official Plans of the lower-level cities, with the detailed reconciliation to happen later. But the team could instead adopt a new plan or delete pro-cycling/walking/transit policies now in current plans.

The year 2001 budget for the city will at least in part be determined by the transition team. If that team does not vote to continue the cycling and mobility management programs now in place at the RMOC and the City of Ottawa, this would be a strong setback for cyclists.

As well, the transition team will shortly be choosing the new CAO for the new city. If that CAO and his/her staff, or the

transition team, are not in favour of continued input from citizen advisory groups, we could lose much of the access cyclists now have in ensuring planning and road decisions don't hinder cycling.

CfSC and local cycling advisory committees aren't waiting for these decisions to come from on high. For the past decade, local city cycling committees have already been cooperating on the Regional Cycling Advisory Group. And, as this issue goes to press, members from all the committees and from Citizens for Safe Cycling will be meeting March 8 to look at how to ensure cyclists continue to have a voice in city policies.

CfSC will also be independently monitoring the work of the amalgamation transition team to ensure that the best cycling and transportation planning practices -- not the worst -- are adopted from all cities. To get the latest news, and to see our previous policy papers on amalgamation, visit our web site at <http://www.CfSC.ottawa.on.ca>.

Last fall, CfSC carefully examined the major proposals for local government reform,

in cooperation with other community groups, and submitted a brief to Special Advisor Glen Shortliffe. We also

made a verbal presentation to Mr. Shortliffe in early November.

During our verbal presentation, we handed Mr. Shortliffe one of CfSC's pothole cards, showing which number to call to report a road/path defect, depending on where it occurred -- as an example of the waste, duplication, and confusion caused by the current municipal system. Mr. Shortliffe was quite struck with, for example, having to choose between five different numbers to report a pothole in Gloucester!

CfSC endorsed the one-city model.

We concluded that the tri-city proposal would simply not fulfill the needs of cyclists and would not properly promote cycling or other non-automobile transportation.

Most important, we emphasized, was ensuring that residents and community groups are fully informed and allowed to fully participate in decisions affecting them (including being able to speak to council committees at evening sessions) rather than setting up further mechanisms to divide up decision-making. In particular, we urged that the new city take advantage of unpaid citizen volunteers on advisory committees (such as the

Regional, Ottawa, Nepean, and Gloucester advisory committees).

Regardless of what model is eventually chosen, we told the advisor, the millions of dollars worth of work that has been put into the RMO and City of Ottawa Official Plans –and the considerable citizen input – should not be wasted. The RMO Official Plan's policies and plans should be adopted as the Official Plan(s) of the new city, and amalgamated with the Official Plans of the appropriate lower-level cities. We pointed out that the Regional Official Plan particularly met the aims of the provincial government, in that it was designed to reduce the cost to the taxpayer by making most efficient use of transport, sewer, and water facilities, particularly those already built. The Regional Development Strategy was explicitly designed to be affordable by the municipality, so “that the levels of required capital investment and future operating costs ... be sustained by expected revenues, assuming revenue sources and levels of taxation comparable to those that exist today “(RDS, section 3.6). We also strongly urged that the city and Regional Cycling plans be preserved and continue to be implemented.

Challenges and Opportunities

by Michael Richardson

Some of you may know some the hats that I wear: CfSC Treasurer, AFO acting secretary, Commuter Challenge organizer. I'm also a member of Ottawalk, PERC and T2000. My wife says that I'm a compulsive organization joiner. But, for the moment, I want to be clear: I'm not wearing any of these hats, and I'm not speaking for any of these organizations.

There has been some recent changes in the transportation activism scene in Ottawa. Ottawalk has recently announced that they will be disbanding on March 31, 2000. Citizens for Safe Cycling has a new coordinator, and has made some important changes in the emphasis of the Safety and Promotion program. T2000 is no longer in financial trouble, and is renewed with vigor. Thanks to efforts of many, we will have a commuter rail in the summer of 2001, and we expect to see the Bikes-on-Buses system expand in 2000. Further, the region has created a new branch, TravelWise, which is expected to continue to do import Transportation Demand Management (TDM) in the new MetroOttawa (aka Ottawa 2.0?). The political commitment to avoiding new road building has never been higher, even if it is

driven at some levels by downloading rather than concern for the future. The commuter challenge will run again this year, and has expanded to almost every major Canadian city. Two car-sharing organizations are about to start.

For many of you, unless you happen to be a compulsive organization joiner, you may not have been aware of all things that have been occurring. What's worse in my opinion, is that while the amount of enthusiasm in each organization is pretty high, the amount of repetition of essentially uninteresting jobs within each organization is high. As each organization is a volunteer organization, it can be hard to find volunteers to do the essential jobs. Many volunteers would prefer to work on projects that advance the obvious goals of the organization.

In the past couple of months a number of people have been discussing the need to build more bridges between organizations. There is a burning need to organize transit users and provide better feedback to OC Transpo, and to the Transit Commission.

Chris Bradshaw has organized the Green-Modes/Healthy-Nodes network, which is a place for various organizations (including community associations) to meet and discuss issues. It is, however, an information sharing network, and

does not attempt to reach out to the general populace.

It has been suggested that it is time to create a more unified Ottawa transportation advocacy organization --- the walking, cycling and transit modes are extremely complementary. When car-sharing and rentals are added, the car ownership method to maximizing mobility begins to lose in the area of price/performance. What is needed is a way to unite proponents of each mode and coordinate efforts. At the same time, the risk, particularly in Ottawa, of introducing some kind of immense bureaucracy. (People outside of Ottawa do much better in this regard. Perhaps there is something in the air or water... maybe too much carbon monoxide?)

In Vancouver, they have such an organization: it is called BEST for "Better Environmentally Sound Transportation". Their publication, the Spoke-n-Word reveals their origins as a cycling organization. They are largely still a cycling organization. Either through foresight or accident (I'm still trying to find out the whole story... by the time you read this, I should know) they picked a name that was much less specific than CfSC.

There are many options:

1. we could transform CfSC into the new organization. I tried for an hour to come up

with a new name with the same acronym, but wasn't able to.

2. we could create an entirely new organization and disband CfSC.

3. we could create an "Ottawa Transit Riders Association" and have it join Green-Modes/Healthy-Nodes, or perhaps a more formal coalition.

4. we could create a new organization Some names have been suggested; "BEST Ottawa", "Ottawa Transportation/ Travel Freedom Association ("OTFA") "Ottawa Urban Transportation Freedom ?? Association ("OUTFAR")

5. we might convince the Federation of Community Associations (FCA) to transform itself into the coalition mentioned in #3 and #4 (CfSC is already a member)

One advantage of the name BEST Ottawa is that it may actually be the start of a grassroots driven organization. We and they get better name recognition. But, it needs to be discussed with the people in Vancouver. Hopefully, by the time you read this, that will be done.

Organizationally, there is still a question of how the organization should be arranged. One thing that I've noticed with many organizations is that all the key volunteers are board members. The result is that the board does all the work, and there is sometimes no way to get

anything done unless the board does it. No matter how much time the board members put in, they organization becomes limited by the bandwidth of the board ("bandwidth" is originally a computer term... those of you who've experienced the difference between 14.4bps and one of the dedicated connections know what bandwidth is).

An intelligent board can intentionally decide not to do things itself if it manages to setup and properly delegate to committees. Ideally, few committees have more than one board member. The trick is for the board to delegate, and for the committee members to understand how much control they have. CfSC has been progressing slowly towards doing this.

The general proposal that I have in mind is that of an organization with a president and treasurer (perhaps also the secretary if required by law) elected by the voting membership, and the rest of the board being made up of one representative from each committee. It would be up to each committee to determine how to organize themselves. The delegate from the committee would attend the board meetings by title rather than person. This would permit committee to have a rotating chair or board delegate. I think that there would need to be some additional failsafes in

the by-laws, but the intention is to make the committees as light weight, and responsible for their own level of bureaucracy. It also permits the organization to "interface" to external organizations. In those cases, the position of representation to the external organization may also have to be elected/appointed by the board.

What does this mean to CfSC? Well, if CfSC was transformed into the new organization, then we would presumably have an Safety & Promotion management committee (as we do now), we would have a newsletter committee (something we are working on), the Ottawa 2.0 Cycling Advisory Committee would be an external organization. Then we would need to create committees to deal with other activities which CfSC is currently not directly involved in: transit, walking, commuter challenge. There might be other committees, discussion is invited.

If a non-CfSC organization was created/mutated, then CfSC could initially become an affiliated external organization. CfSC presently runs two accounts: Advocacy and Safety+Promotion. Depending upon the tax-status (registered vs non-registered charity) and other factors of the new organization, it might make sense to transfer some or all of one area to the new organization. I think CfSC

has the most sophisticated membership tracking system, it might be transferred, duplicated, etc to the new organization, or the new organization might contract CfSC to maintain its membership list.

There are different ways to handle membership.

1. One way is to just have a single membership class. If you join, you join.

2. Another way is to permit people to join the organization as a whole separately from joining each committee.

3. A third way is that one can join the organization as a whole, and then opt to join one or more committees. Some have proposed more for the organization and less for the committee, others have proposed the other way. This is the way most professional societies work: I'm a member of the Canadian Association of Physicists, and part of the Condensed Matter area. The result is that I get the main publication bi-monthly (Physics in Canada) and an additional newsletter once or twice a year.

There are probably other combinations as well. The goal however is that all members get a minimum amount of information on a regular basis, and that information flows freely between committees.

Again, just to emphasize, I'm wearing my cycling helmet with my bus pass in my pocket

and my comfortable shoes on, not any organizational hats. Regardless of which method is chosen, a transit user's association needs to be created soon. Send opinions on this to me at <mcr@ox.org> (Please indicate if I may share them), or post them to the CfSC newsgroup (flora.CfSC), the AFO newsgroup (flora.afo), or call me, 233-6809.

Cycling Issues

Dogs and Bikes: a letter to the NCC

by John Stevenson

Nov 30, 1999

As you know I was at the original meeting, at which various interest groups were represented.

The proposal that concerns us involves the recreational paths; "Dogs must be on leash on the recreational paths". We would like to add; "leash not more than two metres long. Dogs be permitted off leash when a recreational path passes through an 'off leash area' provided signs are posted mentioning that one is entering and leaving such an area.

At both the annual meeting and the board meeting, there was a feeling that the very long leashes are worse than no leash. Picture it; it is night, you are riding along, the owner is on one side of the path and the dog on the other

Regarding the off leash areas; they offer excellent visibility, the dogs prefer the grassy areas anyway and there is plenty of time to avoid a collision.. I sometimes ride through the Arboretum, not a problem.

One person suggested that on a recreation path, if a dog were walking with the master, he would not need to be on leash, I personally would be more

comfortable if he were on leash, Also, if the dog is on or off a leash, he should be on the same side of the path as the master.

At the first meeting I was at, the dog owners seemed to be reasonably satisfied with the proposal; they were your "serious dog owners who had the time and money to drive Fido in the SUV to a "run".

The people at the general meeting held later were more your ordinary dog owners, and felt the regulations too resistive.

Even some of the Citizens For Safe Cycling members felt that.

There may be pressure to loosen the regulations, we should keep abreast regarding our interests.

Winter Cycling: an incident and two comments

The letter reprinted below was sent to CfSC by a motorist. She is happy to let Chain Mail reprint it, but she is also keen to put the affair behind her and requests that her name be withheld.

To whom it may concern:

I am not an avid cyclist, I enjoy it and I think Ottawa is a good place for cycling. But like all things there should be some limitations. Winter cycling as a

motorist is a hazard to our already over-populated roads. Not to mention, the great abundance of snow and ice we get each year here in this part of Canada. I am formally of Halifax, Nova Scotia. I am the typical Maritimer, fairly easy going, friendly and love life and people. But I have to say that the incident I encountered this morning on my way to work in the downtown area leaves me a little cold.

When I see a cyclist especially in the winter on the side of the road I try to give them as much room as possible. However, with the amount of snow and ice on the road in the inner city my car (small Acura Integra) does get caught in the mess of the greasy-ness on the roads. This morning I was driving alongside a cyclist, dressed in bright colours and very visible(which is good) so I went around him so that he that he would have more room to move around the parked cars on the side of the street and also because I thought I was helping him. Well, I went around him, he was behind my car and there was a stop sign coming up. I stopped, he ran into my car or I think he may have slid into it (thus my concern over winter cycling) and then proceeded to yell profanities at me insisting I had cut him off when I had long went around him and past him,

how he was upset with me, still leaves me baffled. As if that wasn't bad enough, he then proceeded to hit and bang my car with his hands, yelling that I had cut him off???? I am so puzzled and a little annoyed by what happened. My husband was with me in the passenger side and was very surprised and shocked himself that he would bang another's car with his hands...my husband, much to my chagrin did get out and ask him in not so friendly terms " what the hell he was doing?" He yelled that I had cut him off, that I should be more aware of cyclist and that he should be first priority on the road? My husband got further annoyed and told him that perhaps he should not be riding his bike in the middle of winter with so much snow down?

The whole incident was unfortunate and I am still quite miffed about it although, I think my husband over-reacted a bit. I am not a subscriber and I happened to be looking for something else when I saw your website. I thought maybe I would re-count this story because it would be of interest to your group and the promotion of safe cycling.

Thank you

The letter has so far inspired a number of written comments. One was from Chris Bradshaw, our interim coordinator, who

wrote an E-mail reply to the motorist in question.

Thank you for passing on your experience. Yes, cycling in winter is a challenge, both to the cyclists and to motorists.

We have copies of a City of Ottawa set of three brochures on winter cycling (each on: The Bicycle, Clothing, and Driving Techniques), which can be picked up here (251 Bank Street, #504) or at the City or Region. They are written for cyclists, not motorists.

Cycling in winter is both legal and an excellent way to stay in shape in winter. It also is a great way to reduce pollution, which increases during winter, not only because people switch to driving from other modes, but because driving itself pollutes more (cold-engine starting, pollution from spinning tires, extra congestion, and pollution from snow "management" activities, not to mention the pollution from spreading salt on wide expanses of roads).

My initial reaction to the incident is that, despite giving the cyclist wide berth when passing, you may have moved back to the right too early, given the conditions for driving. You are in effect changing lanes, and the responsibility rests with you to ensure when you have enough buffer behind you as well as ahead of you.

Also, it is inflammatory to suggest to the other party that they are not smart to be on the road, even when it might be the case. Also, it is no defence, since you clearly admit you saw him earlier. Much road rage is simply an effort to teach other road users "a lesson." His banging on your car was a reciprocal gesture, equally improper. Even though it appears to have been excessive, you as a driver must realize how much force the smallest movement of your car carries in the eyes of a cyclist or pedestrian.

We recommend to winter cyclists to not try to cycle every day or all the way: to skip days when conditions are too rough everywhere, and to dismount and walk on the sidewalk on stretches of road that are icy or overly snow-packed.

However, once the cyclist decides to cycle, he must be afforded all the consideration the law -- and human decency -- requires.

I would suggest that you take care to show consideration -- immediately -- for the vulnerable road user when contact or near-contact has occurred. Please call me if you have any further questions.

Another comment is the one below written by myself, Philip Shea. It is my belief that the incident raises some very large issues.

Without a video camera in place and in operation at just the right moment, it is impossible to determine the facts of the initial incident. The motorist is convinced that she gave the cyclist enough room; the cyclist, according to her account, was certain that she cut him off in a way that could have caused a very serious accident.

However in his behaviour after the incident, even taking into account that he may well have lost his composure, the cyclist was wrong, wrong and wrong again. According to the motorist, he yelled profanities and hit the car.

Overlooking the lack of civility (Hollywood at its crudest seems to be the norm these days), the cyclist did a great disservice to cycling in general and winter cycling in particular.

Apparently the cyclist has never heard of Premier Mike Harris and his "Safe Street Act". Mr Harris' law has very little to do with actually keeping the streets safe.

Rather the law is pandering to those people who have the perception that the streets are unsafe. A CBC commentator pointed out recently that many of those who are for the law rarely venture downtown if only because they believe that it is too dangerous. They are people very ready to vote for the man who promises to keep them safe and

unbothered in their heated/air-conditioned cars.

Many of these people would probably like to see cycling on roads banned completely. They realize that this would involve quite a fight if only because their friends and neighbours go out for short rides in good weather or, once the snow is gone, their own children take bikes onto the road to go to school. Therefore they would be ready to accept a compromise, a ban on winter cycling.

Mr Harris knows a populist cause when he sees one. He realizes that there are a lot more people who drive cars rather than ride bicycles, particularly in winter and particularly in his political stronghold, the suburbs. A couple of well publicized accidents involving cars and winter cyclists or enough complaints from motorists that they feel threatened by winter cyclists, and bicycles may well be declared vehicles to be used in warm weather months only. Of course he might well give the power to pass such a law to the municipalities. And in the new Ottawa the car-loving suburbs will have a very big voice.

Other than riding carefully we can't do much about the accidents. Nor can we do much about the love of such accidents in certain of the media. However we can do something to lessen the perception of some people

that cyclists are an uncivil and threatening bunch.

In the incident mentioned above, the cyclist, assuming that an action of the driver had put him in danger, should most certainly have done what was necessary to attract her attention and should have firmly explained to her what she had done. However firmness does not have to involve profanities, it doesn't have to involve yelling, and it doesn't have to involve hitting the car. Before the incident the motorist didn't like the concept of winter cycling, now she probably doesn't like winter cyclists.

The fact that the motorist wrote to CfSC indicates that she probably looks upon most cyclists as a reasonable and civil bunch of people. It is a shame if the actions of one cyclist serve to turn people such as this motorist against us.

.From the Editor

This has been my first attempt at producing Chainmail. I would like to thank Brett Delmage who has spent many hours instructing me and working on computer repairs.

I'm fully aware that the resulting product is not ideal. Please bear in mind that a few weeks ago I didn't know a WordPerfect from a comma splice. I'm learning but it takes time.

Keep the articles coming.