

CHAINMAIL

Late Summer
2007

The newsletter of Citizens for Safe Cycling
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“Mid-Rider” program opens commute for far-away cyclists

Many people who commute from far-flung suburbs to work in downtown Ottawa would love to do it by bike, but don't have the time or stamina to cover the long distances involved. A new cycle commuter program has the answer for them.

This summer, Ottawa Mid-Riders will allow people living in the far west end – Bells Corners, Kanata, Nepean, and beyond – to transport their bikes on their cars to central-west locations and complete the trip by bicycle.

"This is a program aimed at people who want some exercise but can't or won't cycle from home, and who prefer to use cycling paths rather than the road," said Pat MacDonald, who came up with the idea.

"Mid Riders have the flexibility of having the car available for other errands such as picking up kids, going to appointments, shopping, plus the benefits of regular exercise in a safe environment such as the paths."

In June, Ms. MacDonald told CfSC's Board of Directors about the program at the monthly Board meeting, getting CfSC's endorsement of the program and a promise of promotional support. "It's great to see regular cyclists thinking to themselves 'hey, why isn't this being done?' and doing it" said CfSC President Charles Akben-Marchand. "We want to help people with energy and workable ideas like Pat's."

...Continued on page 4



The 417 overpass section of Bank street is often busy and never pleasant (above). The gaping holes on the sides of the road only made matters worse. Those holes are now fixed and it's a much clearer road ahead (right). Thanks to Peter Sloan for drawing attention to the problem.



Power of the Press

By Peter Sloan

On a Monday in June I received a surprise phone call at home. It was from Tony Lafaro, the Citizen columnist. He wanted a comment from CfSC on an award in a Windsor court to a 63 year old surgeon who had fallen off his bike on an unmarked raised grate and had sustained career-ending injuries. He was awarded \$843,000 against the City of Windsor for negligence.

I was asked if this could also happen in Ottawa. Self-evidently it could!! Tony asked if I could give an instance of a similar hazard here – and luckily (or unluckily, as I almost fell off too) I recalled a badly sunken grate on Bank Street northbound directly underneath the Queensway. It was particularly dangerous as it is quite dark there and it is easy not to see it. On Tuesday, an article appeared in the Citizen about the negligence award, citing the above example. ...Continued on page 5

In this issue:

Bluesfest	3
T&T Presentation	4
Volunteering	5
Pathway Hazards	6
President's Report	6
Bike Theft	7
Membership Form	7
Cycling news in brief	8

Chain Mail is published by Citizens for Safe Cycling, the non-profit association that promotes cycling as a viable means of transportation in Ottawa 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.

Opinions expressed in *Chain Mail* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CfSC, its board, or its members. Reproduction is permitted provided both author and source credits are given.

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The 2006-2007 Board of Directors is:
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Directors at Large: John Stevenson, Ian Bickis, Will Hallam, Peter Sloan, and Dave Yarker

Board members can be reached through CfSC at (613) 722-4454 or Info@SafeCycling.ca.

The CfSC Board meets monthly on Monday nights at 19:00. All interested members are welcome to attend. Contact secretary@SafeCycling.ca for time and place.

For inquiries about CfSC memberships, email Membership@SafeCycling.ca.

For general inquiries email info@SafeCycling.ca



CfSC's New Logo!

Watch for this new logo on CfSC's new volunteer t-shirts at cycling events around town!

Bike Store Discounts

These stores give discounts to card-carrying CfSC members. Some restrictions may apply.

The Cyclery 1073 Bank Street - 10% off parts and accessories	Joe Mamma Urban Cycles 216 Pretoria (at Bank) - 10% off parts and accessories
Westboro Sports Centre 327 Richmond Road - 10% off parts and accessories	Full Cycle *NEW* 427 St. Laurent Blvd - 10% off parts and accessories
McCrank's Cycles 889 Bank Street - 10% off parts and accessories	 Valiquette's Source for Sports *NEW* 1740 Carling Avenue - 20% off in-stock accessories
Tommy & Lefebvre Stores 464 Bank Street, 2206 Carling Ave, 499 Terry Fox Drive, 2615 Lancaster Road, Unit 107B, 250 Centrum Blvd (Orleans) - 10% off regular price cycling clothing and accessories	 Fresh Air Experience 1291 Wellington Street - 10% off parts, accessories, and clothing; 5% off bikes
Orleans Cycles *NEW* 2404 St. Joseph Blvd 10% off parts and accessories	<i>Note: MEC and CycleLogik are CfSC corporate members, but are unable to offer discounts.</i>
Bushtukah Outdoor Store 203 Richmond Road 10% off parts and accessories	Rebec and Kroes *NEW* 1695 Bank Street 10% off parts and accessories

Editor's Note,

This is my last issue of Chainmail, though only my third, as I will be heading out to Vancouver in a month. I have appreciated the opportunity to help publicize the activities and accomplishments of CfSC this year. As Charles says in his President's Report, I am amazed at how quickly the year has passed. I wish I could have done more for cycling while I was here, but such is life.

Regards, Ian Bickis

Enjoy the Blues – Your Bike is Safe

By Charles Akben-Marchand

For the second year in a row, CfSC partnered with the Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest to provide secure, supervised valet bicycle parking for Bluesfest patrons, and it was a resounding success!

Cyclists enjoyed peace of mind that their bikes, helmets, and panniers were safe while they enjoyed the many big acts at the Lebreton Flats near the Canadian War Museum. Many were impressed by the speed and professionalism of the service—one regular customer went so far as to bring Timbits to the volunteers!

Former CfSC Program Coordinator Jennifer Allen and I (both acting as volunteers ourselves) were in charge of ensuring the compound was staffed with a full complement of volunteers over the 12-day festival. Jen mainly handled the scheduling and volunteer management, while I was on site most of the time, ensuring that people didn't have to wait in line very long when the rush came on at the end of the last show of the night.

In all, we parked over 2800 bikes, and raised just under \$2000 in donations, which will be split between CfSC and the Blues in the Schools foundation. We hope to expand the service next year, to accommodate even more volunteers and Blues fans.

But here's the added bit: because the service was provided by CfSC, and because CfSC volunteers were on hand most shifts, people who used the service went away safer than when they came in.

In addition to the many informational pamphlets and maps we had at our table, we sold LED lights for when people went home in the dark. It was very reassuring to

see such a high proportion of cyclists leaving the park with lights.

We couldn't have done it without the hard work and dedication of the bike parking volunteers, who learned and ran the various procedures, tips, and tricks, and who retrieved bikes almost nonstop between 9:30 and 11:30 many nights. Many volunteers came in to help out at busy times when they weren't scheduled, and longtime CfSC volunteer Brian Martin went so far as to wipe the water off saddles on the rainy Saturday night.

Many volunteers said they enjoyed the experience and want to do it again in the future -- two people even said they'd like to be area supervisors next time! If you're interested in volunteering for a Valet Bicycle Parking compound, contact CfSC at info@SafeCycling.ca: many Ottawa festivals now have the service.

CfSC has done it at the CKCU Ottawa Folk Festival since 2002, and at Bluesfest since last year, and Dave Ashton has done it for many years at the HOPE Beach Volleyball Tournament, and this year at the Dragon Boat Race Festival and the FIFA Under-20 World Cup events at Lansdowne Park.



A full stable of bikes is a good indication of another successful Bluesfest.



Volunteers are a blur of activity as bikes are quickly retrieved during the evening peak (above), while a steady stream of cyclists dropped their bikes off all day (right).



Prez makes explosive T&T presentation

CfSC President Charles Akben-Marchand made a presentation to the Transportation and Transit Committee on June 21st. He was responding to the Task Force on Transportation, particularly with regard to the Transportation Master Plan.

He emphasised the need to act now to encourage cycling in Ottawa, and decried the lack of funding for cycling programs and infrastructure in the 2007 budget.

He pointed to the Task Force's support of cycling and the need for the City of Ottawa to do more, including a rapid implementation of the Transportation Master Plan.

Charles finished by making some comparisons between Ottawa's cycling prioritised and those of other cities. His complete remarks on that were:

First, let's contrast Ottawa's roads funding with its cycling funding. As Councillor Doucet points out as frequently as possible, there will be a record amount of new roads built in the City of Ottawa this year, and a record low on road maintenance. In January of this year, this committee approved \$2.7 million in capital expenses to purchase vehicles to maintain these new roads, and \$820,000 in annual operating expenses just to operate these vehicles. With this simple decision, \$820,000 (plus inflation) was added to the road maintenance budget for every year in the future, so long as these roads continue to exist. Meanwhile, the committee took three-hours to decide whether \$50,000 for cycling provides "value for money"? I'd say it

doesn't—the City should be spending a lot more on cycling.

A second comparison: In 1999, after years of lobbying from CfSC, OC Transpo became one of the first Canadian transit companies to have a Rack & Roll service to combine cycling and bus transit. That program has since expanded to about a quarter of OC Transpo's fleet. Kingston's bus service, on the other hand, followed Ottawa's successful example with their own service in 2003, and has expanded it to the point that this year its entire fleet of buses are equipped with racks. Further, Kingston's racks are installed for more months of the year than in Ottawa. Our group hopes that the City of Ottawa will once again take the lead by having Rack & Roll year-round!

I'll only make one more comparison, this time in Ottawa's favour: When I'm riding my bike in Ottawa and a motorist's behaviour puts me in danger, I'll report this unsafe driver to the Ottawa police. That complaint is usually followed up by a police officer from the bike squad. While the officer can't issue a ticket based on my phone complaint, they will often contact the driver and provide a stern reminder of their responsibilities as a motorist. I tried reporting a similar dangerous incident in Gatineau, and their police service refused to even take a report. Hopefully, Ottawa's new Police Chief will continue this excellent track record of promoting safety.

To wrap things up, Citizens for Safe Cycling supports the Task Force's recommendations towards cycling. Which is to say that whatever comes of the transit debate, the City of Ottawa must identify its plan for cycling, but more importantly, Council must implement that plan.


Mid-Rider Program

...continued from page 1

So far there are two locations available for mid-riders, at Carlingwood Shopping Centre and at the Tom Brown Arena, both in Ottawa's near West-end. Ms. MacDonald and CfSC are looking for other partners in 2008.

While there is no cost, there are some ground rules. At Carlingwood, you must use a specific parking area, and you must register the vehicle and sign a waiver at the Courtesy Desk.

Christine Leadman, Councillor for Kitchissippi Ward, agrees that this initiative fits with the City of Ottawa's goal to get cars out of downtown, and has negotiated a limited number of parking spots at Tom Brown Arena, 141 Bayview, to be available for the program. Simply phone Councillor Leadman's office at 613-580-2485 and ask for the signed agreement. There is no cost.

For more information on the Ottawa Mid-Rider program, or if you know a business owner who can provide parking spaces to expand the program, contact ottawamidrider@sympatico.ca 

New CfSC Brochure:

Enclosed with your copy of Chain Mail is CfSC's new membership brochure. Let us know what you think of it before we do a bigger print run. Or, give it to a friend and get them to join CfSC. Send comments to Info@SafeCycling.ca

Power of the Press

...continued from page 1

..On Wednesday morning, I was riding past that spot on my way to the CfSC storage unit when I saw, under the Queensway overpass, a flashing hazard beacon and a PATCHED GRATE. The very next day!!! The grate has since been permanently repaired and is 100% safe. Is the City ignoring hazards until they are shamed by the Press into reacting?

I called Tony and told him of the "power of the press" to achieve such instant results. He was amazed and offered to ask his Editor if he could publish a list of the 5 or 10 worst cycling hazards in this city (hoping for similar fast reaction). As I don't cycle on every road in this city, perhaps YOU, the reader, can help compile such a list. Please send me details of the nature and location of serious hazards by phone at 613-731-9968 or by e-mail at peter_d_sloan@hotmail.com so that they can be passed along to Tony when we have enough. To be fair to the City, please also report the same hazard to the City at their 311 service.

CfSC Volunteers

CfSC would like to recognize the outstanding contributions of the following volunteers by declaring them volunteers of the month.

Jen Farr for her organization of the Ottawa iteration of the World Naked Bicycle day, and for speaking about bike safety to *Ontario Today*.

Alex Magdzinski for heading the Ottawa University Bicycle Club as well as increasing the security of bicycle racks on campus.

Volunteer Opportunities

Get involved, learn the issues, and make a difference! Here is a selection of the wide array of volunteer opportunities.

Join the CfSC Newslist

For over 10 years, CfSC's public e-mail list is where cycling news and upcoming CfSC events and discussions on current cycling issues have been posted!

To find out how to join the current discussions of our newsgroup visit www.safecycling.ca/news/newsgroup.html

Attend a CfSC Booth

CfSC has booths all the time! The best way to learn about CfSC and cycling issues is by hosting a booth with someone who knows lots about them!

In addition to special events, we're planning on having a booth at least once a month to help attract volunteers. Our latest one was on Thursday, June 7 at the Corktown Footbridge.

If you're interested let us know at info@SafeCycling.ca and find out when upcoming booths will be.

Come to an Advocacy meeting!

Come help out the committee that works to get more CfSC members to make CfSC fun! This group coordinates projects to raise awareness of cycling issues. There are many little tasks that come up that we can use your help with!

The Advocacy Committee meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 19:00 at the Bridgehead coffee house on Third Ave, just off Bank. E-mail Info@SafeCycling.ca to confirm the date, time and location.

Board meetings

Come to a Board meeting. CfSC's Board discusses the highest level of CfSC business, but also a wider variety of subjects than the committees.

The Board usually meets on the second Monday of the month at 19:00. Check out the Newslist or email Secretary@SafeCycling.ca to confirm the time, date and location.

Chain Mail Editor

With Ian stepping down, CfSC will need a new newsletter editor. Contact Editor@SafeCycling.ca if you are interested. 🚲

Advocacy Meeting



Beware of pathway Hazards

Ottawa is fortunate enough to have a wide network of multi-use paths which allow cyclists to avoid on-road hazards. But cyclists are still exposed to dangers on the paths and should take adequate precautions.

There have already been at least two incidents this Summer where unsuspecting cyclists crashed after hitting bollards on the path.

One accident reported to CfSC occurred just off the aviation parkway. A metal post cemented into the path had been cut down, but there remained a 2.5 inch segment sticking out of the ground. The woman who hit the post broke her elbow.

Another incident, which was reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*, occurred on the NCC path along the Gatineau side of the Ottawa river. There one of the bollards that control vehicle access to the paths was folded down, making it difficult to see. It is also positioned immediately around a corner, making it even less visible. There, the cyclist who crashed lost consciousness for several minutes and afterwards required stitches.

These are two of the more serious incidents. Many of the smaller ones are not reported and no one is injured. But they remind us all to be vigilant on the pathways, even though there are no motorized vehicles.

This is not to say that the pathways are unsafe, simply to remind everyone to be vigilant and aware when on the pathways.

As always, also be aware and respectful of the other pathway users. Do not speed on the pathways. Announce your presence when passing, and use lights when warranted.

President's Report

By Charles Akben-Marchand

In physics, a singularity is a point in spacetime where it is impossible to know what happened before. I feel like I've just been through a singularity with Bluesfest.

Supervising the Valet Bicycle Parking compound at this year's Bluesfest was a very fun, but very taxing activity. I was there every single night of the festival's 12 days, and Jennifer Allen, the official Area Leader, was there most days as well. We were both there the day before and after the festival, transporting fifty ten-foot wooden City of Ottawa barricades to and from the site.

And we'd both do it again. We managed to raise about \$2000 in donations, half of which will go to CfSC, and half of which goes to the Blues in the Schools foundation. Bluesfest is now our biggest sole fundraiser of the year, and our second biggest source of income after membership dues.

During Bluesfest, there were also a number of things we accomplished. We got new CfSC brochures printed, and got into contact with the Ottawa Police Service sergeant who held a cycling enforcement blitz in early July. We'll be working with that officer later this year to do even more promotion of cycling safety. (Contact us if you want to help with this!)

Luckily, e-mail serves as a resource to remind me that there was life before Bluesfest, and we have actually done quite a lot since the previous Chain Mail came out.

We've had our first two monthly info booths (July's was precluded by Bluesfest), first at MEC, then at the Corktown Footbridge. We've communicated with City Hall on a number of issues, including Innes

Road at the 417, Prince of Wales, Bank Street, and the report of the mayor's Task Force on Transportation.

We've also endorsed Pat MacDonald's Mid-Rider initiative, which allows people who live far from town to park nearer to town and cycle in the rest of the way.

We continue to get many requests from the public for services that we used to run under the City's Cycling programs. This includes route requests, courses, and booths (we had to turn down a number of requests to hold information booths during Environment Week and Commuter Challenge Week, because we no longer have someone to coordinate or staff so many booths). We currently refer requests for courses to the Envirocentre (www.envirocentre.ca), who won the City contract for the 2007 Cycling Education Program. However, we don't yet know what the City plans to do in 2008 and beyond.



Charles in action at the Bluesfest

The Federation of Citizens Associations of Ottawa-Carleton (www.fca-fac.ca), an umbrella group of community groups, has established a Transportation Working Group, and CfSC has joined the FCA in order to provide input from a cycling perspective to that working group. CfSC is also a member of the City Centre Coalition, a central-area umbrella group that discusses transportation issues.

Continued next page...

President's Report

...Continued from page 6

For me, time still passes astonishingly fast. It's hard to believe that the next AGM is just around the corner, and my two-year term is coming to an end. I think that CfSC is definitely a healthier organization than when I became President two years ago, though I can't comment on how things have changed since I first became involved in October of 2000.

I hope that lots of people come forward to keep CfSC's 100% volunteer-based activities growing. We're hammering out the kinks in our IT infrastructure which will make it even easier for us to keep

CfSC members informed of important issues, and easier for people to participate. Even if you only volunteer a couple of hours per month, your time benefits all Ottawa cyclists.



Living in the country, the suburbs, or a "good neighbourhood" does not make you immune to bicycle theft. The same rules of theft prevention apply.

Once you have accepted that locking your bike is a good idea, make sure you do it properly. This includes: locking your bike to a solid piece of metal, preferably one cemented into the ground; locking the frame and wheels, not one or the other (and seat if it's quick-release); preferably using a u-lock for greater strength and locking it in as visible and exposed an area as possible.

Unfortunately, no matter how well a bike is locked, it can still be stolen by determined thieves. This is why you rarely see expensive bikes locked up outside. But with proper precautions you can greatly deter thieves.

As insurance, get your bicycle engraved by the Ottawa Police's Operation Identification Program, or with your driver's license number. Also record the serial numbers on the bottom of your frame. This will allow easier recovery of your bicycle if it is ever stolen. If you follow the other words of advice though, hopefully you won't ever need the numbers.

Bicycle Theft

By Ian Bickis

Working in a bike store, I am constantly amazed at the number of people shopping for a new bike simply because their old one was stolen. I always make a point of finding out how exactly their old bike was snatched. I thought I would share a few tips as well as pitfalls to avoid which could help you avoid having your means of transportation stolen.

First, always lock your bike. It may seem simple, but it's one of the most common reasons. "I just left it for a second" or "it was such a

piece of junk" are the usual justifications for it, but a bicycle should never be left unlocked. Bike theft, after all, is usually a crime of opportunity.

Second, your shed and garage are not as secure as you think. It's usually pretty easy to break into a backyard shed unsuspected. A garage can be secure, but it requires that the door be closed. Manual ones need to be locked, and if you have an automatic door, then don't leave your car unlocked with a remote sitting in it. And just to be safe, lock up your bikes in the garage.

Join/Renew Today!

If your membership has expired or expires in the next 3 months, you should renew soon. Member cards for renewing members are sent out with each mailing, usually every two months. You can send updated contact information to Membership@SafeCycling.ca

Send your completed form with payment to:
Citizens for Safe Cycling
Box 248, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P6C4

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Post Code: _____

Phone: H: _____ W: _____

E-mail: _____

New Member Renewing

Please select one membership option:
Individual: 1 Year (\$20) 2 Years (\$35)
Household*: 1 Year (\$25)* 2 Years (\$45)*
Low Income: 1 Year (\$10)

Please send me information on volunteering
 Send mailings by e-mail when possible

My **additional contribution** of \$ _____ to assist CfSC volunteers with their work is enclosed.

Any cycling comments/concerns? _____

*Household Memberships Only:
2nd Member's Name: _____
2nd Member's E-Mail: _____

www.SafeCycling.ca

Cycling in the news/ News briefs

The **re-Cycles Bicycle Co-op** has a new website address at www.re-cycles.ca. They are now on Summer hours, meaning they are open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 18:00 to 22:00.

Human Powered Vehicle Operators of Ottawa have their **weekly dinner** Sundays at 6pm at the Vietnam Noodle House (706 Somerset Street West), and often go riding before or after. All are welcome. See their many photos at <http://hpv.tricolour.net>

Theystolemybike.com is a new resource that hopes to help people recover stolen bicycles. It was started by Jason MacLean who was himself victim to multiple bicycle thefts. On the site you can register stolen bikes, report found bikes, or check the list to see if you may be purchasing a stolen bike.

CfSC's website, **SafeCycling.ca**, is slowly being updated and upgraded. We hope to keep an updated list of advocacy campaigns and successes, as well as an active home page with more regular updates. If you would like a piece posted to the website, or suggestions on improving the site, please send it to info@safecycling.ca and we'll get to it as soon as possible.

CfSC member Andre Gauthier participated in the Ottawa-Gatineau **Ride of Silence** on May 16th. This ride, which occurs around the world, is a memorial ride for all those who have died riding their bikes.



I wish I could credit the creator, but all I have is the website: <http://pricetags.wordpress.com/2007/06/03/june-is-bike-month/>
Submit your own cycling-related photos for the next Chain Mail!



Bikes get very lonely without wheels, and very uncomfortable without seats. Make sure to lock yours up when you lock the frame.