

Issue 38

Fall 2008



The Metro Vancouver Municipal Elections are this November. See inside for a one page pull-out of questions to ask your Local Candidates!

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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*

## **BC Ferries Bicycle Infrastructure by Kari Hewett**

*an abridged version of a letter written to BC Ferries*

Since moving to Vancouver ten years ago, I've made several bicycle trips to various parts of Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and the Sunshine Coast. I've always been treated very well by BC Ferries Corporation staff and crew, but on no vessel have I come across any cycle-parking facilities. This is despite the section on the BC Ferries website regarding Onboard Storage:

*Once onboard, cyclists will be directed to an area on the car deck where bicycles can be secured. Even though BC Ferries crew conduct regular patrols of the vehicle decks, all bicycles and personal gear should be secured.*

However there are no facilities on any vessel... even the newly-built "Coastal Renaissance" and "Coastal Inspiration" ferries. It seems very odd that a decade after working for BC Ferries and receiving numerous suggestions for improvements, I find myself making some of the same suggestions I was given, and tried to get action on, in the mid 1990s.

With the current "storage situation" actually taking no deck space, why are cyclists still being charged for carriage? And, as oil/petrol continues to increase in price and add to BC Ferries' costs, our small, light bicycles aren't adding much weight to the vessel either; only a fraction the amount of a standard-sized passenger vehicle.

Continued on page 3



*Metro Vancouver's Bike to Work Week was a huge success! Photo by Dave Nidrie*

**Safety Refresher:** Remember to check out the VACC's Commuter Cycling Skills Courses - they are a great safety refresher for all cyclists. See a short video and registration details at <http://vacc.bc.ca/bikeskills/>. The course also provides you with tips to make cycle commuting a fun and regular part of your life.

Contact: [bike-skills@vacc.bc.ca](mailto:bike-skills@vacc.bc.ca)

## The Urbane Cyclist

Published quarterly by the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC)

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

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### MEET US

The VACC Board meetings are open to all interested in bicycling in Greater Vancouver. We generally meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Phone **604 878-8222** for details.  
[info@vacc.bc.ca](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:newsletter@vacc.bc.ca)

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

**Next deadline: Friday, Oct 17, 2008**

## **Bike Parking in Vancouver by Rob Brownie**

A study is underway to inventory short-term bike parking facilities in the City of Vancouver. Spearheaded by the Transportation Working Group of the Vancouver Public Space Network (VPSN), the project is focused on getting a better understanding of the quality and capacity of existing bike parking while developing a set of recommendations for how to make improvements. Earlier this year volunteers with the VPSN began collecting data from a number of Vancouver neighborhoods to determine the quantity of city-installed bike racks, but also unconventional parking options that cyclists are often left to lock-up to when a bike rack is simply nowhere in sight- think trees, parking meters and railings. A map of Robson St. has been prepared that depicts the survey results and this information will be included in a final report that will be presented to the City of Vancouver at a later date. The next phase of the project involves a bike count on those streets that have undergone a bike parking inventory and a review of the City's present and future plans for installing new racks. In fact, CBS/JCDecaux- the company that is under contract to install Vancouver's bike racks – is also in charge of the new bus shelters that have been appearing over the past few years. It is safe to assume that there is more advertising revenue potential in a bus shelter than on a bike rack which may partially explain the speed at which new bike racks are appearing on our streets. The VPSN has also been looking at bike parking in other cities and will make recommendations for rack designs that maximize space and capacity. Look for future developments on this project and future opportunities for the VACC to assist in promoting the efforts of this project. Also, consider asking mayoral and council hopefuls what they intend to do to improve bike parking infrastructure when you attend all-candidates meetings this fall. If you would like to get involved or have further questions about the bike inventory project (e.g. how can other municipalities benefit from this study?) please contact Karen Parusel, Transportation Coordinator for the VPSN at [karen@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:karen@vancouverpublicspace.ca).

### **Green Skyline Tours - by Bike!**

Join Cascadia for Green Skyline tours this September and experience them by bike! Most tours will be 30 minutes, and most will be hosted four times a day at each location, beginning at 11AM and continuing at 1.5 hour intervals thereafter.

- Thursday, Sept 25<sup>th</sup>: UBC's green buildings
- Friday, Sept 26<sup>th</sup>: Main Street corridor and downtown
- Sunday, Sept 28<sup>th</sup>: residential projects in Vancouver, North and West Vancouver

Check <<http://www.cascadiagbc.org/events/2008/september/green-skyline-vancouver/>> for more information closer to the date, and to register. **VACC Members are eligible for the Cascadia Partner rate.**

Please check [www.vacc.bc.ca](http://www.vacc.bc.ca) for upcoming information about a potential VACC-led bike tour of these buildings.

Continued from the first page

Carbon-based fuel costs seem likely to continue increasing. Transport, commuter and vacation planning, locally, regionally and nationally will all need to adapt to these changes and to the growing interest in, and demand for more and better facilities for cyclists.

BC Ferries could further encourage cyclists by: clearly striping separate bike lane approaches and exits at terminals; planning for more bicycle-specific terminal amenities such as separate bicycle-entry ticket booths (as at Tsawwassen terminal), short term parking racks outside food areas, an air pump and water fountains; allowing advance reservations as vehicles are on many routes; carrying even a few movable racks for use on deck(s) as needed; providing easy way-finding (all-weather bulletin board style maps or like) at each terminal which show links to adjacent municipalities' bicycle routes and amenities.

Not only would these (and other) practices and services help encourage more residents to travel with BC Ferries by pedal-power, but they might also attract increasing numbers from outside BC and North America.

Finally: food is our fuel--we tend to eat and drink at terminals and on board, thus also contributing to the profit margins of the catering section. If you continue to increase the healthy, nutritious meals and snacks available onboard and at terminal food areas, many of us will be eating even more.

For all these reasons, and more, BC Ferries can only hope to improve their profile and adapt successfully to changing travel needs by better accommodating cyclists of all stripes.

*(Editor's Note: Just prior to publication, there is word there might be some improvements coming to BC Ferries. A fold down bike rack was spotted on the "Spirit of Vancouver Island". BC Ferries would welcome specific, practical suggestions about racks and other standard cycling amenities, both for vessels and at terminals. Please contact them at: [customer.relations@bcferries.com](mailto:customer.relations@bcferries.com). You should also cc your MLA and the Premier [[premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)] with your comments.)*

*Given the upcoming elections...*

***"What is the most pressing issue in Vancouver for cycling?"***

*This generated a lot of discussion among the VACC Vancouver/UBC Committee recently and we finally came up with a two part response:*

*"Though there are many good cycling facilities, the overall quality of the cycling infrastructure is poor due to the cycling network being incomplete and wayfinding being difficult. The single issue which stands out is, of course, the Burrard Bridge issue."*



## **The VACC E-Bulletin: Read All About It!**

*The Communications Committee of the VACC is pleased to announce that we have launched the first edition of the VACC E-Bulletin, an electronic update of cycling events, programs and regional advocacy news (and more!) that is sent to your e-mail address monthly.*

*The E-Bulletin is sent to members and other cycling oriented organizations within our network. Get up to date information on the issues we are focusing on in your community and learn more about how you can volunteer or come out and participate. If you have any questions regarding the E-Bulletin you can direct them to Rob Brownie ([robro@shaw.ca](mailto:robro@shaw.ca)) or our office manager, Jodi Peters ([jlpeters@vacc.bc.ca](mailto:jlpeters@vacc.bc.ca)).*

## **The Reverse Onus of Proof—A Cyclist's Prayer by David Hay**

The Cycling Community appears ready to benefit from two cycling friendly Vancouver mayoralty candidates. This comes after years of hard work and commendable advocacy for better cycling conditions.

Participation in cycling and awareness of cycling have both increased exponentially, and cycling in the region has graduated from marginal to mainstream.

The public and environmental health benefits are inarguable, and even the most intransigent local policy makers now recognize cycling has finally arrived. Any yet, from a legal perspective, not much has changed.

There are limits as to what can be done locally and without legislative change at a Provincial level. Engineering changes to road related infrastructure are critical to improved safety, and accidents are much less likely when reducible risk is, in fact, reduced. But after an accident occurs, and serious injuries are sustained, the legal David versus Goliath battle ensues, with all the pressure squarely on the shoulders of the injured and often disabled cyclist. The playing field is simply not level, nor will it ever be, when the individual squares off against the resource rich motorist's insurance company.

A big part of the problem is that in B.C. an injured cyclist carries the onus of proving negligence. This is standard in a civil negligence claim but can work a real hardship on cyclists with limited means. The injured cyclist must prove fault for any entitlement to damages beyond simple accident benefits. However, cyclists are typically not in a position to marshal evidence immediately after a serious accident largely because of the trauma inflicted by the automobile. The resulting evidentiary vacuum may necessitate a complicated and expensive

reconstruction of the accident with significant associated expert fees. Insurers virtually never admit fault early on, forcing cyclists to carry the financial risks of proving it by retaining experts on the subject of "what happened". Those costs, in tandem with medical expert fees, remain the responsibility of the cyclist until the conclusion of the matter. Law firms like mine retained by cyclists will "carry" these costs, and obviously this is essential, but this won't necessarily help the cyclist sleep at night. If he or she fails to discharge the onus of proof and prove negligence, they are on the hook for all of the money spent on expert evidence in order to establish liability on the part of the motorist.

The solution? Reverse the onus of proof, so that when a cyclist is in a collision with an automobile, the motorist (in reality the motorist's insurer) carries the onus of proving he or she was not negligent.

In this way, the motorist carries the burden of proof, and faces the ultimate risk of non-persuasion on the issue of fault. The cyclist is allowed to focus on recovery and retain experts only if the need arises. Resources level out, power dynamics decrease, justice is done. The onus of proof can be critical to an assessment of liability and can spare an injured cyclist a lot of unnecessary stress.

The reverse onus applies to situations involving individuals injured on public transit, in B.C., so why not cyclists? The reverse onus also applies to cyclists in Ontario (Highway Traffic Act), but not B.C. Provincial legislation is required. Municipalities might be able to take a stab at it through bylaws but would probably go beyond their constitutional authority were anything meaningful attempted. However, the municipal level may be where this seed needs to be planted. The time is now.

*David Hay is an injury litigation lawyer and partner at Richards Buell Sutton LLP. He specializes in bike injury cases. He can be contacted at 604-661-9250 or dhay@rbs.ca.*

## MEET YOUR BOARD

### MEMBERS



**Heather Shay**

Heather is a community planner who profoundly believes that cycling should be an integral part of transportation culture, and is passionate about getting people out of their cars and onto bicycles. She discovered the joys of cycling at a tender age from the back of her mom's bike, and learned to pedal for herself on her older brother's Big Wheels (when he wasn't looking). Since then she has used her bike to transport everything from German Shepherds to barbecues, and has always believed it is the best way to get around.

After organizing a very successful and fun 'bike train' to work with her colleagues for Bike to Work Week in 2006, Heather saw the power in education, encouragement, and cycling advocacy. New to the VACC Board, Heather hopes to bring her experience in community and strategic planning and working with non-profits to contribute to a vision where cycling for transportation becomes a part of the mainstream culture.

## **Bikes and Politics- How To Get Your Local Candidates Thinking Seriously About Cycling Issues by Rob Brownie**

Municipalities across Metro Vancouver will be holding elections this November and this will be your opportunity to help your local candidates think seriously about cycling issues. Over the coming months all-candidates meetings will be held throughout your community, and media outlets will be hosting panel discussions on a whole range of topics. As cyclists you may be wondering how best to participate in such forums and so we have prepared a list of questions that will help you frame your concerns. These questions are, for the most part, applicable throughout the lower mainland and can be modified to suit your community. As advocates our goal is to encourage politicians to develop informed and intelligent policies that will lead to direct change. Whether you attend a pre-election meeting, phone in to a radio show or write letters to local candidates, remember that you have a better chance of making an impact if your questions are specific and you request a plan for how change will be carried out. And let's not forget to ensure that everyone we know is also voting for cycling when they mark their ballots. So spread the word!

### **Personal Cycling:**

- Do you believe that cycling is a viable form of transportation? Do you presently cycle to and from work, and will you continue to do so during your term on council? How do you rank cycling in relation to other forms of transportation?
- How often do you cycle? Why do you cycle and what are your usual modes of transportation? What type of improvements would encourage you to cycle more?
- Do you cycle around (your community), and how often? Which cycling routes have you used and how do you rate them?

### **Cycling Financing:**

- Do you think more funds should be spent on cycling facilities? Would you support doubling or tripling the cycling budget over the next three years?
- How much would you support spending per year on cycling in your municipality? Can you recommend a percentage (or an amount) of the transportation budget that should be devoted to developing cycling infrastructure and programs?
- Will you fund the costs for separate and dedicated cycling lanes, particularly in congested areas where it is dangerous for cycling?

Next page

- Will you fund other facilities, e.g. bike racks in convenient places around the city, funding for workplaces to improve facilities, like bike cages, etc.?
- Municipalities that have projects "on the shelf" and ready to go are the ones that can take advantage of new capital for infrastructure development. As municipalities often rely on senior levels of governments and other institutions for cost sharing capital projects, will you, if elected, insist that your District staff have cycling initiatives ready to go if the opportunity arises for cost sharing with these levels of government?

## Design for Cycling and Cycling Promotion:

- Given that it has been proven in cities all over the world that reducing traffic lanes DOES NOT cause congestion, and given that the City would be saving about \$30 million by installing bike lanes on Burrard Bridge rather than building sidewalks outwards, do you:
  - support the lane reallocation trial?
  - if not, why not?
  - if yes, what will you do to ensure that it is a success?
- Do you support the reallocation of lanes of traffic or on-street parking to create bicycle lanes? If so, describe when and where you think this would be appropriate? If yes, would you move forward on this issue while on council?
- In your opinion what are the impediments to increased bicycle use in your municipality? What will you do to lessen those impediments?
- How are you going to improve cycling routes across bridges (in your municipality)?
- What improvements will you make to cycling in (your community), and when?
- How will you help increase the number of people who use cycling as a frequent means of transportation. e.g. do you have any plans for public education, working with ICBC, schools, etc.?
- Are you familiar with the findings of the "Cycling in Cities Survey", and if so, will you demand that municipal staff start designing facilities along the listed guidelines immediately?

*(Note: This list has been compiled from responses to an open discussion about the upcoming elections that was posted on the VACC list serve.)*

## Headwinds

*"May the wind be always at your back."*

- *To the bicycle riders who are unaware of right of way on the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge. No matter which side you ride, uphill cyclists have the right of way, downhill cyclists should yield.*
- *To the **City of Coquitlam**: When is there going to be a safe option on United Boulevard? When trying to hug the curb, the vehicles pass too close for comfort! When taking the lane, it really backs up traffic!*
- *To the **District of North Vancouver** for the lack of funding to build bike lanes on major arterials This, in part, is due to a lack of understanding of the needs of transportational cyclists.*

# The Urbane Cyclist

## Tailwinds

*"May the wind be always at your back."*

- To **St. Paul's Hospital**, for adding one extra car space to their secure bike parking! Once the bike racks are added, about 20-25 more bikes will be safely secured.
- To **TransLink** for including a section on car-free local getaways in their free publication "Buzzer". For Steveston Village, Burnaby Village and Bowen Island, they include bicycling directions, in addition to transit information.

[http://www.translink.bc.ca/files/buzzer/2008/Buzzer\\_July4.pdf](http://www.translink.bc.ca/files/buzzer/2008/Buzzer_July4.pdf)

## Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition 2008 Raffle

Thanks to the sponsors of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition 2008 Raffle:

Norco Performance Bikes and Axiom Performance Gear  
Mountain Equipment Co-op  
Capilano Suspension Bridge  
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(See our raffle winners, page 10)



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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"/> Greater Vancouver | John 604 986-9220   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> North Shore       | Dave 604 988-5454   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Tri-Cities        | John 604 469-0361   |

## Who to write about issues in The Urbane Cyclist:

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

Honourable Kevin Falcon  
Minister of Transportation  
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STN PROV GOVT  
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Fax: 250 356-2290  
Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

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Mayor Derek Corrigan and Council  
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Burnaby BC V5G 1M2  
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City of New Westminister  
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Refer to our website for more contact information.

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## **Bike to Work Week Wrap-up by Mia Kohout**

This past May 26 – June 1 was the VACC's second annual region wide Bike to Work Week. This year's event reached as far as Abbotsford, helping to double the amount of registered participants from last year. A record number of cyclists took to the streets and pedal powered their way to work, many for the first time. During the week, the VACC's website registered 1780 new cyclists!

### **2008 Results:**

1143 Teams

5,879 Participants

60 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> prevented from being released into the atmosphere

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition would like to thank the following sponsors for helping make Bike to Work Week 2008 a huge success:

Government of British Columbia	UBC	Mighty Riders
TransLink	Electronic Arts	Bike Doctor
eBay	Opus Hamilton Consultants	JV Bike
Global BC	M&M Meat shops	Reckless
CBC Radio 1	Hatfield Consultants	Ethical Bean
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Vancity	The Now	Bread Garden
Canada Place	Change	Cornerstone Café
City of Richmond	City of Burnaby	3x3 Designs
Worksafe BC	Cap's Bicycle Shop	The B:C:Clettes
Cooperative Auto Network	Bikes on the Drive	Bicycle Shed Ensemble
City of North Vancouver	Raincity Bikes	

A big thank-you to Bike to Work staff and volunteers for making this is the best Bike to Work Week yet.

**Bike to Work year round!** *Stay tuned for fall/winter Bike to Work campaign details.*

# The Urbane Cyclist

## Our 2008 Raffle Winners:

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize Winner: Gerry Fuchs, Vancouver, ticket #3	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize Winner: Mark Nissen, Vancouver, ticket #258	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize Winner: Tammy Brander, Vancouver, ticket #539
Axiom Panorama Jacket	Axiom Panorama Jacket	Axiom Panorama Jacket
Pair of Axiom Monsoon Panniers	Pair of Axiom Monsoon Panniers	Pair of Axiom Monsoon Panniers
Axiom Enforce Air Bicycle Pump	Axiom Enforce Air Bicycle Pump	Axiom Enforce Air Bicycle Pump
Axiom Aluminum Water Bottle	Axiom Aluminum Water Bottle	Axiom Aluminum Water Bottle
\$200 Mountain Equipment Co-op Gift Certificate	Vancouver Maritime Museum Passes	Axiom Aluminum Water Bottle
Two Vancouver Maritime Museum Passes	Capilano Suspension Bridge Passes	Two Vancouver Maritime Museum Passes
Two Grouse Mountain Passes	Two Playland Passes	Two Royal BC Museum Passes
Two Capilano Suspension Bridge Passes	Two Vancouver Aquarium Passes	Two Museum of Anthropology Passes
Greater Vancouver Zoo Passes		Two Vancouver Museum Passes

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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