

# DERAILLEUR MAILLEUR

## June 2009



### Spring T-Raining is here!

By Alice Kroman

“So, when you ride in the rain, don't you get wet?” a doe-eyed co-worker recently asked me. I explained to him that if I only rode when it was 70 degrees and sunny outside, then I would never reach the level of fitness required for the longer rides later in the summer. It got me thinking about how miserable riding in the rain may seem to a non-cyclist and how miserable it CAN be to an uninformed cyclist. It took a few seasons of trial and error for me to come up with the necessary tools to ride comfortably in the rain.

First of all, you have to get front and back fenders; preferably the kind with a little mud flap on them. Yeah, it will add weight to your bike. But guess what? So will the jelly doughnut you ate yesterday. This should be your commuter/beater bike you're riding anyway. After riding my 50 pound Trek to work 75 miles a week, getting on my road bike is like switching from station wagon to a Miata. The fenders not only keep you from getting a skunk stripe up the back of your shirt, it will also serve to keep your feet dry. I can ride about 15 miles in steady rain before my feet will even start to get wet.

The next item necessary for riding in the rain is a helmet cover. A company named J & G makes some nice ones and you can find them online. The problem with a wet head is that the water will eventually run down your face.

If I'm riding home from work, I have makeup on, and this can result in a Tammy Faye look that will destroy my contact lenses and leave me blindly swerving down Milwaukee Avenue. The visor on my helmet also helps a great deal in this department. So does protective eyewear. Get the kind that you can swap out lenses. The yellow lenses are designed for overcast and rainy weather. Something about the yellow will make things pop, making it easier to see.

Now if it is warm and raining, who cares about getting wet? An experienced rider can tell you that GETTING wet is uncomfortable, but once you ARE wet, it won't bother you. If you're heading home or someplace where you are able to change into dry clothes, suck it up and just get wet. It's not the worst thing that will ever happen to you. If it's COLD and raining, then that's another story. J & G makes awesome rain pants and jackets with zipper vents and a cool mesh liner that will keep the clothes from sticking to you. They are expensive, but worth it. Don't wear a windbreaker. Your sweat is trapped inside and it will stick to you. So not only are you still wet, but you stink too.

And now for a few safety points. Make yourself blink-a-licious! When I ride in the rain, I have at least 4 rear lights and 2 headlights. You cannot have too many lights. Also remember that your brakes need to make contact with the rim in order for your bike to stop. In the rain, that rim is quickly getting coated with crud. About every other block or so, lightly apply your brakes to clear off some of this stuff. And still, give yourself a longer stopping distance. With rain, chances of a flat increase dramatically. Glass and other sharp nasties that would normally fly off the tire will stick and work their way in with each rotation.

The best tool for avoiding flat tires is proper inflation. Carry extra tubes and know how to change a flat. And so you know, that slime stuff doesn't work. It just makes changing a tube in the rain a more miserable experience. Kevlar tires are your best bet. Also, it's spring in Chicago which means pothole mania! If you are not familiar with the road that you are on, avoid the puddles. You may think it fun to splash through it, but it could be a one foot crater waiting to kill you. If you have to take the car lane to avoid it, then take it. Merge carefully, signaling to the drivers that you are coming over. You may be surprised how courteous Chicago drivers can be.

Once you reach your destination, you will need to clean and lubricate the chain. All that road crud is now stuck and it needs to be removed sooner rather than later. By wiping down your chain with a few squirts of your preferred chain lubricant, you'll prevent rust and dramatically increase its life. It only takes a few minutes and you'll be glad for it later.

Most importantly, don't ride if it makes you miserable. I won't ride in thunderstorms. The thought riding around with a big chunk of metal between my legs during a lightning storm scares the bujeebez out of me. Besides, the wind makes it too easy for me to be blown into traffic. I've driven through rough storms and I know that drivers have a hard time seeing the road, much less a cyclist along side of it. In dangerous weather, find shelter. Just not a lone tree in the middle of a field don't be that guy. The storm will blow over soon enough and you can be safely on your way!

Enjoy the spring weather. Embrace it. And know that warmer, drier weather is on the way!



# PREZ SEZ

By Anne Alt



If you had told me ten years ago that I would now be living south of 95th Street, I would have called you crazy. Don't get me wrong, Beverly and much of the south side was unknown territory to me back then. But I found my new neighborhood on a club ride several years ago. After living on the north side for years, I was curious about a new south side ride on the CCC schedule ("Bungalows, Ranches and Georgians," offered again this year) so I checked it out. My introduction to places like Madison Park, Avalon Park, Chatham, Beverly and Morgan Park was a real eye opener. Those areas had been totally off my radar, and I had no idea how beautiful they were.

Over the years, I've continued to be amazed with the variety of interesting places and information I've discovered on CCC rides. Those of you who have been on club rides in unfamiliar sections of the metro area have likely made similar discoveries.

I often find myself introducing non-bike friends to new places in the city and suburbs and they ask me "How did you find this place?" I suspect that a few of them feel that my response is becoming a cliché: "I found it on a bike ride." Many of my favorite restaurants and neighborhoods were discovered on bike rides.

What are your favorite places? Any you'd consider sharing? The possibilities for club rides are limited only by your imagination.



## Pedaling in Pittsburgh

By Joe Dickstein

Last month, while spending the holidays with family in Pittsburgh, Phyllis and I decided to sample a different variety of urban cycling. For those of us used to Chicago's flatlands, let me reassure you Pittsburgh is anything but that. We arrived on a Thursday evening and before leaving for a traditional Passover seder, we took a short ride around the University of Pittsburgh area where our hotel was located. We swung by the former site of Forbes Field, once home to the Pittsburgh Pirates. The only remaining part is the left field wall over which Bill Mazerowski hit the game winning home run in the seventh game of the 1960 World Series. Cub fans should note that wall is ivy covered and was actually the inspiration for the Wrigley Field vines first placed by Bill Veeck, Sr., the North Siders' general manager in the late thirties. The former site of home plate is actually in the new University of Pittsburgh Library.

Friday was rainy but the clouds held off long enough for a ride to the Squirrel Hill neighborhood where our daughter Erika and her family were staying with her aunt and uncle. Erika, who in past years had accompanied me on many rides, has not had the opportunity to do as much riding as she would have liked due to family obligations, but is now trying to become an active cyclist again. She rode back with us to our hotel, a round trip of less than ten miles which seemed longer because of what we euphemistically call Pittsburgh's uneven topography. We took the opportunity to visit a local bike shop to pick up a city bike map and plan longer rides for the weekend.

Saturday, while cool, was bright and sunny and Phyllis, Erika and I set out to cycle the bike trails and streets of the Steel City. After a precipitous descent we found ourselves at the base of a ravine locally known as Panther Hollow from which a trail leads to the Monongahela River and to a second trail that follows that waterway to downtown Pittsburgh. That trail starts at the Allegheny County courthouse and is popularly referred to as the "Jail Trail." Just beyond downtown is Point State Park, a reclaimed industrial area where the Monongahela and the Allegheny join to form the Ohio River.



After reaching this destination, we retraced our steps and, to our good fortune, found a slightly less steep road to climb out of Panther Hollow.

Sunday, our last day, was our chance to try some different trails. This time, Phyllis and I ventured alone across the Monongahela to an area with the fortuitous name of the South Side Flats. Bike paths extended both up and down river on that side as well but, due to time constraints, we were able to sample only a small part of them.

One final note: Pittsburgh is indeed a city of bridges. To the city's credit virtually all of the major bridges of all three rivers including those of Interstate Highways have separate bike lanes. Actually, the bridge we took to the South Side actually was two separate structures, one for cars and the other for bikes and pedestrians.

I had a great time riding in Pittsburgh and would encourage all who find themselves in this wonderful city to not get intimidated by the terrain and to keep on cycling.



## May Meeting Report

Before those carnivorous, or should it be cakenivorous, CCC'ers attacked this cake like a climb up the Damen St. bridge, it spelled out "Chicago Cycling Club, 15 years and still rolling along".

## About the Club

### Mission

To facilitate recreational bicycling in a non-competitive environment in and around the Chicago area; to promote safe bicycling habits and proper bicycling etiquette; to provide bicyclists an opportunity to network with other bicyclists; to encourage bicycling as a safe and viable alternative to other modes of transportation.

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### Officers

President: Anne Alt  
 Vice President: Julie Sherman  
 Treasurer: Alice Kroman  
 Secretary: Michael Wasserman  
 Member at Large: Jim Adgate, Art Gilfand  
 Education: TBD  
 Newsletter: Justin Sondak, Tom Grose

### June Club Meeting

Join us for our June meeting on Tuesday, June 9, 7:00 p.m. at Uncle Julio's, 855 West North Avenue. This month's meeting will focus on burritos, tacos, margaritas and their place in your training regime. Keep an eye on your email for an Evite or R S V P t o t r e a s u r e r @ ch i c a g o c y c l i n g c l u b . o r g so we can add you to our reservation.

## Summer of Fun

By Anne Alt

This summer, we'll resume fun club traditions and introduce some new rides.

FWEGA is the classic summer casual ride. If you're scratching your head at this crazy acronym, it's the Fourth Wednesday Evening Getting Acquainted ride. As this issue goes to print, the first FWEGA of the season will be underway. Riders unwind on a short, easy weekday night ride, and enjoy a bite and a drink at the end. I hope that you'll join us for the next FWEGA, whether it's your first of the season or first time ever, and make it a regular habit. It's a perfect opportunity to meet other club members new and old and make new friends from May to September.

June will include multiple slices of south side history and architecture, minor league baseball, burgers (White Castle sliders vs. Hackney's on back-to-back dates), our old favorite Super Dawg, and lots more.

Save July 5 for a new experiment: a digital photo scavenger hunt. The ride will be open to 8 teams of up to 4 riders. Participation is by RSVP until all spaces are filled. Each team must have at least one digital camera, which doesn't need to be fancy. Disposable is fine, as long as it takes pictures. Bring your creativity and knowledge of Chicago history, architecture and trivia. We'll meet at the starting point to give each team their clues so they can plan their routes, and we'll meet up at the end to have lunch and exchange stories. We'll put our pictures online afterwards.

## STYLE YOUR RIDE



**JERSEYS**  
 Sleeveless .....\$50  
 (Men: S - XL)(Women: S - 2X)  
 Shortsleeves .....\$55  
 (Men: S - 3X)(Women: S - 2X)  
 Longsleeves ..... \$60  
 (Men: M - 3X)(Women: M - XL)  
**WINDBREAKER** - \$60  
 (Men: M - 3X)(Women: S - 2X)  
**GLOVES** - \$10

**CLUB MEMBERS ONLY** may purchase these items by contacting Duane O'Laughlin [merchandise@chicagocyclingclub.org](mailto:merchandise@chicagocyclingclub.org) 773-612-8157. May not be shipped. We will meet you at a club event or ride or you may pick up items by making arrangements to do so in advance.

The mid-season picnic ride on Saturday, July 11 is a familiar ride in a new format. We will have our picnic at Promontory Point (approx. 55th St. at the lakefront) as in past years, but will start from multiple locations - Clock Tower, South Side and West Side - to make the ride accessible to more neighborhoods. Please join us for a potluck feast in a truly lovely location.

I'm looking forward to seeing lots of you out there on rides over the next few months.



### BECOME A MEMBER FILL OUT THE FORM AND MAIL IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO CHICAGO CYCLING CLUB

I, for myself and for any other minor on whose behalf I sign this membership application, agree that 1) bicycling is a potentially hazardous activity and that accidents can occur from negligence or carelessness; 2) ride leaders' maps and/or written directions are provided for my convenience only and not to guarantee a safe route or trip; and 3) I voluntarily participate in club events and assume all risks associated with participation therein, including but not limited to injury, falls, contact with other participants, weather, traffic, and road conditions, all such risks being known and appreciated by me.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Primary  
 phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secondary phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Emergency contact/phone \_\_\_\_\_

I obtained this membership application from \_\_\_\_\_

I want to receive a paper copy of the members' directory  Yes  No the club newsletter  Yes  No

I would like to help with the following:  ride planning  newsletter  publicity  meetings  social events

Annual dues:  Individual (\$20)  Family (multiple individuals at one address \$25)

Do not share my contact information:  within the Chicago Cycling Club  with other bike-related organizations

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Chicago Cycling Club Newsletter June 2009



May CCC meeting and 15th Anniversary Cake Celebration

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO CYCLING CLUB  
**DERAILLEUR**  
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