

DERAILLEUR MAILLEUR

June 2008

The Great Wild Turkey Attack!

By Greg Valent

It was Sunday, the 6th of April 2008, the day of the season inaugural CCC Champagne Ride. I skipped it. Instead, I decided to do some trail sleuthing. If you're familiar with the CBF Chicago area bicycle map, you'll know that it has always shown the Skokie Valley Trail in Lake County to be complete to the east/west leg of the Green Bay / Robert McClory / North Shore bike path along Illinois 176. Well, that has been wishful thinking, until now.

The Lake County Department of Transportation announced last year that construction of the final, northern 1.5 miles was to begin. It would close the gap by building a tunnel under a heavily used freight rail line. Well, it didn't get done last year, and earlier this year, they announced that construction would begin in April. I decided to find out for myself.

It was a good day to ride, cool, but, sunny. I rode to the southern trailhead at Lake Cook Road, just west of Skokie Valley Road, and started pedaling north. A young woman straddling her bike at the side of the trail soon flagged me down. Since she didn't scream, hit me, or call the police on her cell phone, I figured the Valent charm was doing its job. She gestured up the trail and said, 'wild turkeys attacked me'. I was sure that I misheard her, but she repeated, 'wild turkeys attacked me'. I looked ahead and saw some large dark shapes on the trail. Wild turkeys !?! In Highland Park !?!

I thanked her and rode slowly towards what, I didn't know. As I got closer I saw that they were indeed wild (maybe) turkeys. Large and brown, not the white domestic type that are usually served for Thanksgiving dinner. There were a male and a female, and when I got very close, the male spread his wings and lunged at me, gobbling excitedly. I retreated back to my new acquaintance. (We later introduced ourselves. She was Angela, a member of the Evanston Bicycle Club.)

Well, what the turkeys were doing in the wilds of the North Shore didn't seem to

matter at the moment. They were blocking our way and apparently had no intention of moving. Since it was a male and female pair, we thought they might be guarding a nest, even though neither of us knew turkey nesting habits. Then, another cyclist came along. We told him what to expect and he just rode right past them with no problem. Also, about this time we noticed that they were walking towards us. We moved back along the trail and they kept following. No nest to guard we guessed.

I grasped my handlebars and told Angela, 'if he can do it, we can do it'. I then calmly rode past the turkeys without a feather being raised. Now, it was Angela's turn. She started riding toward the turkeys, but, as she approached them, she slowed to almost a stop. The male attacked! Well, he raised his wings and made noise, so, she retreated again. Now it got interesting. The male started walking toward Angela and the female started walking toward me. (Apparently the Valent charm does not discriminate based on species.)

We were still trying to figure out the scenario when a man and woman wearing sweatsuits approached from the south. They chatted with Angela, then the man calmly walked over and picked up the male turkey. The woman came over to me and picked up the female, who had been hanging around just looking at me. She then explained that the turkeys belonged to their neighbors, and had just gotten out of their habitat and made for the trail. That was anticlimactic, tame wild turkeys. She also explained that she was afraid of the male, as he didn't seem to like human females. That would explain why he showed extra aggressiveness toward Angela.

Now that the great turkey attack was over, Angela and I rode north along the trail and chatted about cycling. She turned off at Deerpath Road to head back. I continued on to the northern terminus at Laurel Street to find that, yes, Lake County had started working on the trail extension. There were truck tire tracks in the soft ground and survey stakes with flagging tape continuing north. It looks like the trail will finally reflect the map.

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(l to r) Joe, Phyllis & Kitty at rest stop on Kal-Haven Trail

Kal-Haven Tour

By Joe Dickstein

Fresh from the Five Boro Tour where we rode around New York with 29,997 of our best friends, Kitty Shanahan, Phyllis, and yours truly tried a different type of organized bike tour. So the three of us headed east again this time to Michigan to ride on the annual Kal-Haven trail ride. Opened in 1991 on the sight of an abandoned railroad, the Kal-Haven is a 35 mile bike and hiking trail linking the towns of Kalamazoo and South Haven.

Enjoyed by over 90,000 people each year, the trail is host once a year to an organized bike ride where options include riding the trail itself along with road rides between 25 - 100 miles. We opted for the trail ride and, in order to reach South Haven by 8 a.m. (7 a.m. Central Time), we were on the road by 4 (ouch). We caught a shuttle bus that took us and our bikes to Kalamazoo so we could ride one way and return to where our cars were parked. The ride itself was uneventful but thoroughly pleasant with a rest stop midway in the town of Bloomington. At the end of the ride we made the mandatory stop for Sherman's Ice Cream, made right there in South Haven.



PREZ SEZ

By Michael Wasserman



Our May club meeting featured a fascinating presentation with DePaul University political science professor Harry Wray, author of "Pedal Power: The Quiet Rise of the Bicycle in American Public Life". Club members, guests and Professor Wray discussed many aspects of cycling in the U.S. today, particularly the climate for cyclists here in Chicago. Those of us who ride in Chicago frequently know that we are fortunate to have as many facilities to support us as we do, but also recognize that there is still much to be done.

Our Mayor (and honorary club member) is considered by many to be a very pro-cycling activist but was understandably criticized at the meeting for only reaching for the "lowest lying fruits" to encourage more and safer cycling. Only so much can be expected from our legislators and political leaders. Politicians who support and promote cycling should themselves be supported and encouraged to continue to advocate for us. But I suggest there is much more we can do to promote acceptance of cycling as a legitimate sport, vocation and mode of transportation here in Chicago.

For ourselves, individually, we should commit ourselves to riding safely and courteously and encourage and assist other cyclists whenever the opportunities present themselves. Former club president Howard Kaplan sets the gold standard in this regard with his delightful "two honk Tuesday" salutes to other riders and ubiquitous honky-horn greetings to children on the sidewalks and parkways. Taking the children in our lives out for frequent bike adventures is helpful. Rendering aid to a rider who has flats or needs other mechanical assistance can also add much to the community, as can a soft-spoken but encouraging word to a rider who is carrying a helmet on his handlebars instead of his head.

The more we ride, the more we encourage others to ride - SAFELY and RESPECTFULLY, the more we declare our right to use the roads and demand that other users share those roads with us, the more others will join us and in turn the wider the acceptance of cyclists in Chicago will be assured.

High gas prices, a slow economy and warm weather will be our allies this summer. Let's take capital advantage to help bring our movement to the people.

Your membership in our club helps too. Club rides offer many riders valuable experience and guidance in navigating city streets and traffic conditions. We help hundreds of riders every year learn new routes through the neighborhoods and acquaint themselves with fellow commuters and tourers, would-be racers, and activists. We hope that you will continue to support our efforts and that we are supporting yours too.

New this month, please take note of Mitch Gold's new Thursday midday ride series for gentlemen (and ladies) of leisure, rides geared for more senior riders to socialize and exercise together. We hope that you will help promote these rides to others who have the time and desire to get out and ride this setting.

For me, one of the greatest things about my club participation has been the truth and pleasure derived from our tag line: "Never Ride Alone In Chicago." For more than a decade, I have had the good fortune to meet, ride with, and befriend many fun and interesting people. As with any all-volunteer social organization, particularly in an urban center, we gain and lose such riders over time. We bid adieu this month to long time club activists Jack Vinson and Marci Cohen, who are relocating to Boston and long-time members Rebecca Theim and George Molnar who are moving to Las Vegas. Thank you all for your service to the club and for your strong pulls on our pace lines. I have been fortunate to share many miles and many adventures with you all. I am grateful for your companionship, your great sense of direction, and for the many good times we have shared. We look forward to remote start rides from your respective new homes in the near future.



The Great Wild Turkey Attack!

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Addendum:

On Saturday, 17 May, 2008, I rode up to 176 to check on trail progress from that end, as a recent note on the Lake County DOT website stated that trail work had started from 176 heading south. There is a wide cleared and leveled trail right of way heading from a point on 176 south toward the current trail. I clocked it at 1.2 miles to an area where the ground is being excavated next to the railroad tracks. It looks like the tunnel will be built and the trail will be a reality. Now, we just need to build the Cook County portion connecting the Lake County Trail to the newly completed Valley Line Trail in Chicago.



Tech Tip: Group and Urban Riding Skills

By Jim Kreps, ECI

As a commuting single rider, a group rider, and an Effective Cycling Instructor, I wish to share the following review of proper group and urban riding techniques. Take the follow tips as refreshers to your common sense driving skills.

When riding as a single cyclist, your focus is usually on riding with traffic, being among autos, pedestrians and roller bladers. In a group, this thinking sometimes gets clouded as you attend to legally riding two abreast but also engage in a casual conversation with a friend. This is where road cycling skills need to be re-emphasized. Remember that you are a vehicle with the same rights and rules of the road as all other motorists, with a few clarifications.

We are slower traffic (at least many of us). In Illinois, slower vehicles, including bicyclists "shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except under the following situations: 1) overtaking; 2) left turning; and 3) avoiding hazards in the road." Only when clear and non-obstructive does the law permit us to ride two abreast. Tip - those of us with mirrors should ride to the left of curbside riders, since we have advanced knowledge of who is behind us. Those who ride in the outer position should constantly be scanning and listening for "car back" situations and maneuver ahead or behind curbside riders to ride single file.

Everyone should know the rules of stopping, left turn, right turn, and obstruction warning calls, but here are a few not-so-mentioned safety tips:

Ride in a straight line and on the right, and stay your course. Do not ride in and out of parked cars. Be a predictable cyclist where others can begin to assume your intentions. Call out your intentions if changing them (i.e.: stopping, turning, hazard avoidance). A predictable cyclist's intentions are safer than someone who is all over the road.

Ride in the direction of traffic when you approach an intersection. We shouldn't group up in both the right turn lane and straight through lane if all of our group is going straight.

Do not ride up the right side of a car who has already signaled their intention to turn right at a stop. If you are going straight, stay on the car's left or, if you are turning right, stay behind them and turn after them. Do not get in their blind spot.

Do not yell "clear" to fellow cyclists going through intersections. The better warnings are "car right," "car left," or to say nothing at all. Conditions can change quickly, and each individual cyclist must be responsible for verifying that the intersection is clear.

Get off the road for group discussions or mechanical breakdowns, even if you are the one who is offering the help.

Leave gaps between groups of cyclists to allow cars and other cyclists to get by us. This is especially true on hills (yes, there are some in our area).

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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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Treasurer: Alice Kroman

Secretary: Jennifer Richards

Member at Large: Frances Austin,
Steve Grossman

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Tom Grose

Next Club Meeting

The Chicago Cycling Club's next meeting will be held Tuesday, June 10, 7 p.m. at the Chicago Public Library's Lincoln Park branch at 1150 W. Fullerton. The speaker will be Ted Hedges of Code Red, Inc. who will make a presentation on CPR and other emergency procedures. Pre-meeting dinner and social hour will be held at Charlie's Ale House, 1224 W. Webster at 6:00 p.m.

Reflections On The Five Boro Ride

Art Gilfand

I was among the CCC riders at the 2008 Five Boro Ride in New York City, a well-planned ride which I highly recommend. It was so cool to enjoy 42 miles of NYC streets free of four-wheeled devices. Brian Bird and I used Amtrak as our method of travel and it was a great way to go.

Here are a few observations from the eye of a Chicago cyclist:

* We did not see a lot of bike racks.

* There are bike lanes and paths in New York City with more lanes in the works. New York City was named one the most improved cycling cities in a recent edition of *Bicycling Magazine*. On the other hand, I was fine just riding in traffic. In fact, I thought drivers were more respectful of cyclists in New York than Chicago. I even thought that New York's cab drivers were more respectful of cyclists.

* The most scenic and interesting bike paths are along the Hudson River and East River. The path along the Hudson is totally off-street, hitting occasional driveways to the docks and park facilities and navigating traffic lights. Each is a like the lakefront path in Chicago, hosting lots of other park users including runners, roller bladders, walkers, etc.

* Surprisingly, their buses do not have racks. We take this fact for granted in Chicago.

* You are allowed to put bikes on New York subway trains, but it seemed not as easy and intuitive as Chicago's. The transit agency asks cyclists to use emergency gates, but not all stations had such gates and some stations are not attended. It seems that we have a more bike friendly rail system in Chicago.

* Art does imitate reality. The Saturday Night Live routine, with the muffled announcements on the subway is apparently true. We took the subway about eight times and none of the announcements were understandable.



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

(XS-2X)

SOCKS - \$6

(S-XL)

BOTTLE - \$3

CLUB MEMBERS ONLY

may purchase these items by contacting Duane O'Laughlin

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.

Group Urban Riding Skills

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Cyclists Remember: Ride SAFE, with common sense, ride on the right, obey traffic laws, ride predictably, be visible and always wear a properly fitting helmet.

Motorists Remember: drive cautiously, pass cyclists with care, watch for children (they are far less predictable), and please, DO NOT use your horn (we know you are there).

Remember to "**SHARE THE ROAD**": "**Cyclists fare best when they act like, and are treated as, drivers of vehicles, with the same rights and responsibilities that all motorists have.**"

Jim Kreps, ECI, Club Member



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 _____

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Club members at the 2006 Tour de Beer

