

DERAILLEUR MAILLEUR

March 2010



Commuting How to Start

By Jim Kreps

Every year around this time, I seem to get many questions related to bike commuting, this column is for those who want to start commuting but for one reason or another haven't done it.

Commuting takes time if it's to become an everyday, comfortable experience. You'll have to consider the route, weather, distance, timing, traffic, parking, clothing, the perspiration factor and the machine (you and the bike).

The Route: "Scope alternatives and determine the route ahead of time". Analyze distance, traffic, number of signals, width of lanes, parked cars along the route, and neighborhood safety before commuting in for the first time. I have recommended and started commuting myself by testing my assumptions on Saturdays around 10:00 a.m. (weekend rush hours are not the same as weekday and starting later may give you that similar comparison to weekday rush hour traffic).

The Weather: "Start out dry, mild and temperature tolerant." For those just starting out, commute only when the pavement is dry, the humidity is mild and the temperatures moderate. If you have access to a shower at work, you may elect to get riskier when temperatures are hot and humid or freezing and cold. But the number one

issue when starting to commute is your own safety, which is why you want to start out on dry pavement only. Have a backup reserve commute plan if it rains in the afternoon (take that El or Metra pass with you).

How Far / Distance: "Number One Tip Start out Slow and Short". If you live up to 5 miles from work, commuting to work is not going to be much effort and you will be surprised that the door to door time will likely be the same if you commute by bike, car or El. Beyond 5 miles, consider driving in halfway, parking your car and commuting from a remote point within 5 miles of work. As you become comfortable with the route, distance and timing, start increasing your commute distance.

Timing, What's This: "Leave earlier if you can when starting out as a beginner." Experience will bring confidence in urban commuting at the heart of rush hour with heavier traffic, but start slow and easy. Commuting in downtown Chicago requires a sixth sense and experience level if you are in the heart of rush hour. A recommended morning time for a 5 mile half-hour commute could be between 6 - 7 a.m. in the morning and after 6:30 p.m. at night, while still in daylight hours. Night riding will require more equipment (lights and bright colored clothing) and with experience, you could venture into pre-dawn and eventually night riding. Survey your specific location and note the times when traffic is heavy and light before starting.

Traffic, Traffic, Traffic: "Backup on the Kennedy, 50 minutes from the junction to the loop." Why would you want to deal with this every morning or night? When surveying your route, select the route that has a traffic flow and density you are comfortable with during your leisure rides.



Ride Leader Training

By Jim Adgate

The March Chicago Cycling Club meeting will be a ride leader training session for all new ride leaders or returning ride leaders who need a refresher. This is an important class for anyone who might want to lead a ride, has questions about leading a ride, is ride curious or just wants to be a better informed rider.

The monthly meeting returns to the second floor meeting room at REI Lincoln Park, 1466 North Halsted, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Jim Kreps will begin the class after club announcements, no later than 7:15 p.m., and will end no later than 8:15 p.m. [Riding technique will not be included with this year's training session, as has happened in years past, but Jim is planning another class on riding technique on Sunday, April 18 - check the CCC Ride Calendar on the club website for details, time and place.

As a reminder, everyone leading a ride for the club needs to be Chicago Cycling Club members - if you haven't renewed your membership for 2010, please do so.

We hope to see past and future CCC ride leaders there.



PREZ SEZ

By Anne Alt



Our club started the year with a rare opportunity. A small group of officers was invited to meet with Mayor Daley. He was interested in hearing more about the club and getting our thoughts about cycling in Chicago. He mentioned that he's enjoyed stories in this newsletter about members' long distance touring adventures. We talked about club rides and how they can affect riders' views of the city.

Throughout our club's history, rides to neighborhood restaurants, shops and parks have been a significant part of our ride schedule. Riding to unique restaurants and getting to know previously unfamiliar neighborhoods has always been a highlight of my experiences with the club. These rides have a bonus effect: promoting neighborhood businesses. If we discover restaurants and shops we enjoy and later introduce others to these places, we're helping to help to create or preserve local jobs and support our local tax base. It's a win-win for the club and the city.

We appreciated getting the chance to talk with the mayor. His enthusiasm about cycling showed throughout the conversation. I feel optimistic that his efforts to make Chicago more bike friendly will continue to make a positive difference in people's lives.

What changes do you think would get a bigger cross-section of Chicago's population out on bikes and make it easier for those who already ride to use their bikes more? I've got a personal wish list: bike racks at more grocery stores (useable designs, correctly installed), a more complete network of bike friendly streets on the south side, comprehensive traffic education in schools (starting in early grades), Safe Routes to School programs at more local schools, additional bike stations in the West Loop and South Loop, implementation of

Complete Streets on the south and west sides (especially on bridges), and bike parking at all sports stadiums and major event facilities. Some are easier than others, but all are possible. What's on your list?

Speaking of bike friendliness, I'd like to say thanks to everyone who attended the Bike Winter Swap Meet and Urban Bike Expo. It was energizing to see so many cyclists and organizations connecting there. Congratulations to Howard Kaplan, Lee Diamond and the other organizers on a successful launch of this new event.

Look for a new version of our web site soon. We still need your photos of club rides and events to make it complete. Our photo contest has been extended. Please e-mail your photos to anne.alt@gmail.com by March 1.

See you on the road!



Commuting How to Start (continued from page 1)

Streets such as Clark or Milwaukee you might want to avoid at first. Elston or Lincoln are wider and may seem less heavily traveled by autos. With experience, you may find yourself tempting Clark or Milwaukee only because they get you from point "A" to "B" faster. But the recommendation here is to start out with comfortable traffic conditions.

Bike Parking: Second biggest concern to a potential commuter behind the perspiration factor is parking. Will the building and your employer allow you to bring a bike into your place of employment? Does the building have a common storage area for bicyclists and is it safe and secure? Will you need to lock your bike up outside? If so, is there a well lit, well-trafficked area for locking up? Consider a minimum of two locks (the more time you take securing your bike, the less time a potential common thief will think twice at trying to remove it). Finally, consider the weather, if you ride in the morning and the weather person lied to you and you cannot ride home in the afternoon, consider your bike's safety after hours. You might also consider the value of your bike (see col. 3).

Clothing: "What do I Wear? What do I do about wrinkles?" Consider at-work storage of clothing brought in on "no-ride" days. If considering carrying clothing to work, roll your clothes to reduce wrinkles and do not keep them rolled for longer than necessary. Store clothing in clean plastic bags to protect it from inside pannier grime. Also consider very carefully, if you are going to ride in your work clothes or bike clothes. Bike clothes are made for the sport and breath, stretch, expand for the movements of cycling. However, if you live really close to work, it's your call where jeans or casual slacks might work just as well.

The Perspiration Factor: "What if I get to work all sweaty?" Start slow, easy and on cool dry days, especially if no shower facility awaits you at work. Or join a health club near where you work. Another advantage to commuting early is allowing time to sponge bath and apply deodorant in the office restroom. Further, commute in the morning "easy" and "push" the pace in the evening.

The Machine - You: "Keep yourself nutritionally fit" Don't say to yourself you have no time for breakfast or coffee anymore because you need to commute. Eat earlier, be persistent, and give yourself the time.

Once you are beyond beginner status, you will be surprised that commuting by bike does not take any longer than commuting any other way except making time to dress twice each morning.

The Machine - Bike: "Keep your bike maintained and tires filled at all times" Survey your route for potential "breakdown-help" locations such as fire stations, police stations, large vestibules or covered areas (to get out of the wind or cold). Bring cash for the unexpected cab trip or transit ride. Put together a tool kit with an extra tube (tube replacements are faster than patching plus you can patch your tire at home that evening). Also, consider an inexpensive, but functional and working, bike if you have to park it outside.



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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 Tom Grose
 Rides: Jim Adgate

Open Streets Comes to Oak Forest

From 9 - 10:30 a.m. on March 6, you can bike, walk, run, rollerblade down Cicero Avenue from 151st - 159th Streets in Oak Forest. Open Streets, which handed over Chicago's boulevards to human powered transport, is coming to the suburbs, thanks to The City of Oak Forest and Active Transportation Alliance. From downtown, take the Metra Rock Island Line to the Oak Forest station, or meander by bike through Chicago's southwest side and access the Midlothian Meadows bike paths to Cicero Avenue. It's an open event, no registration required. For More information visit www.oak-forest.org/community/OakForestFleadh.asp or contact Steve Buchtel at steve@activetrans.org.



Chicago Cycling Club

Financial Statement

Period of 01/01/2010 through 02/15/2010

Balance as of 01/01/2010: \$ 8,876.48

Total Income: + \$ 982.95

Total Expenses: - \$ 1,177.19

Balance as of 02/15/2010: \$ 8,682.24



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.

Portable Quotes

"To be a real city rider, you have to learn the streets and the neighborhoods. You have to know which streets are better to ride on, which ones are safer at night. This can't be taught."

- Keith Mills

"Bicycling is a big part of the future. It has to be. There's something wrong with a society that drives a car to work out in a gym."

- Bill Nye



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 March 2010



Club Riders Explore North Park, September 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO CYCLING CLUB
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