



The Squeaky Wheel

Issue No. 16

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

July 2004

From the President Light Rail Extension to Sunrise: More Options ... and Challenges

By Lea Brooks

While waiting for the 5:16 p.m. Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) light rail train at the 16th Street Station on a recent Friday, I wondered if I would be able to board with my bicycle. It had three rather than the usual four cars for peak times and was jam packed.

I climbed up into the back of the second car, which already had three bicycles, and squeezed in. The other three cyclists were accommodating. A passenger who did not have a bike loudly complained that he would not be able to get off the train at the 65th Street Station because the bicycles were blocking the door. He continued to complain even after we assured him that of course we would move our bikes so he could exit.

While RT has relaxed its restrictions on bicycles aboard light rail trains, challenges remain. These challenges will probably escalate with the extension of light rail to Sunrise Boulevard last month and to Folsom next year as more bike commuters combine pedaling with public transit.

Under current regulations, four bikes are allowed on each car: two in the front and two in the rear. The exception is the first car of a multicar train, which allows only two bikes in the rear to accommodate front-boarding passengers with disabilities. One-car trains, which run on weekends and at night, allow four bikes.

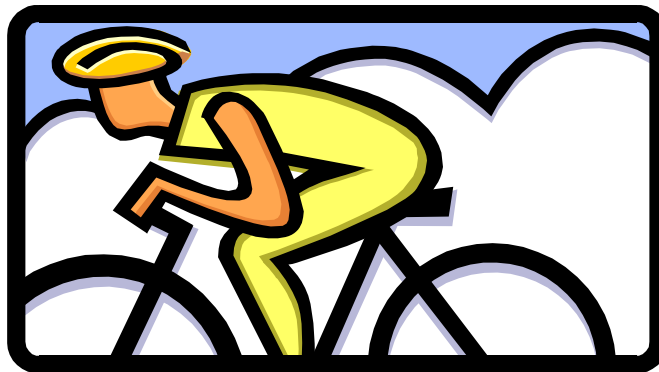
The other bicyclists in the back of the train

President, page 3

SABA Opposes Measure A

By Walt Seifert

The SABA Board voted June 12 to oppose the Measure A renewal as it is currently proposed. Measure A is the 1/2 cent sales tax that goes to transportation in Sacramento County. It expires in 2009 and a 30-year renewal will be on the ballot in November. If the measure fails to garner a two-thirds majority vote in November, it will be back on the ballot in 2006 or 2008.



Here's part of the letter SABA sent to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and to the city councils of Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Folsom, Rancho Cordova, Elk Grove and Galt.

"The Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA) wants a balanced transportation system. Our current system is not balanced. The Measure A renewal will not get us to a balanced system. As always, we are eager to work for a better transportation system. We are willing to continue to work for community consensus on what should be included in Measure A. We believe consensus was tantalizingly close this time around, but was blocked by a few who do not share the interests of the broader community.

Measure A, page 3

Folsom Boulevard Widening

By Walt Seifert

The city of Sacramento's No. 1 "major street" project is to widen Folsom Boulevard underneath the Union Pacific (UP) railroad tracks east of 65th Street. The widening complements the desire of California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), to switch the main entry to the campus from J Street to Folsom. The project would also extend Ramona Avenue from Brighton to Folsom Boulevard, providing new access from the south.

The project should provide some solid improvements for cyclists — as long as the city doesn't go overboard in widening Folsom. The widened Folsom Boulevard will have bike lanes. The Ramona connection will open up the campus and the American River Parkway to the south. Currently, cyclists are faced with the dubious choices of using Power Inn Road or 65th Street to head south.

Bicycle/pedestrian guru Dan Burden has inspected the area and reviewed the city's preliminary plans. He thinks the area has great potential for mixed use and that the goal should be no less than to make Folsom a grand boulevard, complete with high-end aesthetic enhancements. He advocated using roundabouts instead of traditional intersections at the new campus entry and at 65th Street and Folsom. He also urged minimizing crossing distances for any intersections that were to be built or modified.

There will be a public meeting on the project in August. As with most transportation projects, you don't need to be checking your watch to see when the project will be done. Even if everything goes well, construction won't start until 2008. ☸

SABA Mission

*SABA represents bicyclists.
Our aim is more and safer trips by bike.*

SABA Vision

*Bicycling for everyday transportation is common
because it is safe, convenient and desirable.*

SABA's Folsom Chapter, the Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates (FABA), meets at 7 p.m. the third Thursday of the month. For more information, call Chapter Chair Tony Powers at (916) 353-1745 or you may e-mail FABA at faba@tomatoweb.com.

The Squeaky Wheel

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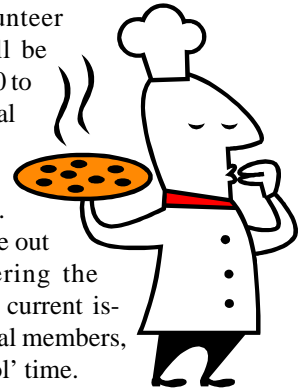
Welcome new members!

Cathy Buscaglia
Curtis & Jennifer Finton
Patrick Johnston
Amy Kasameyer
Wayne Larson
Gene Marshall
Kerry Martin
Douglas Patterson
Ray Spear
Jim Streng
Dennis Touros



SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, Aug. 12 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA Territorial HQ, 909 12th St. Most of you out there may not think this invitation is for you. It is. We'd love to have you come out and participate in furthering the SABA cause. We discuss current issues, write letters to potential members, and generally have a good ol' time.



SABActions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Sacramento Transportation and Air Quality Collaborative plenary
- Folsom Boulevard Widening
- Sacramento County Neighborhood Transportation Management Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Davis City Council supporting containerization of green waste
- Sacramento County and cities in Sacramento County on Measure A

Other

- SABA table at Caltrans East End Project Transportation Fair

President, from page 1

that afternoon gave me an earful about the uncertainty of taking a bike on the train and about dangerous road conditions for bicyclists. They are regular light rail riders and have often been prevented from boarding or kicked off when the official maximum of two bikes in the front and two in the rear is reached.

Strict enforcement of the rules usually occurs when security personnel are present. The other cyclists noted that some security personnel strictly enforce the rules and others do not. Some security personnel have allowed as many as eight bikes in a light rail car.

It is this uncertainty that RT needs to address. For me on that Friday afternoon, I took my bike on the train so I could get home early to pack up and leave for the weekend. Taking the train saved me time and reduced my bike commute distance from 39 to 21 miles, which enabled me to rest for a bike race the following day.

Not being allowed to board the train would have been an inconvenience because my departure for the weekend trip would have been delayed. Plus, hanging out at a light rail station waiting to see if the next train has room for a bike is not my idea of a good time.

For the other riders, uncertainty is a daily stress. One of the individuals lives near the Butterfield Station and works at the Port of Sacramento. He doesn't drive because of a medical condition. His one-way bike commute is nine miles without light rail. He likes to ride his bike, but the route, much of it on Folsom Boulevard, is dangerous and unpleasant.

Prior to the Sunrise extension, I occasionally took my bike on the train for the commute home. I took the train to the then-end-of-the-line at the Mather Field Station and rode approximately five miles on Folsom Boulevard to my home.

The Sunrise extension has reduced the distance from home to the light rail station to approximately two miles. I am looking forward to taking my bike on light rail after night meetings downtown and not have to rely on the generosity of others to drive me home with my bike in the back seat or trunk. Riding late at night on Folsom Boulevard, even with the proper lighting, wasn't an acceptable option for me. Riding a couple of miles home from the Sunrise Station is acceptable because much of the route is either the Sunrise Corridor Bikeway under Highway 50 or streets with minimal traffic and bike lanes.

I have personally talked to many individuals who are interested in riding their bikes one way to work and taking light rail home, or vice versa. It's the uncertainty that holds them back.

Reducing traffic congestion and air pollution requires creative solutions. A guaranteed ride on light rail and on RT buses, which currently limit the number of bikes to two, would make another dent in the complex transportation problems facing the Sacramento area. ☼



Measure A, from page 1

"Funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is essential to obtain a more balanced transportation system. SABA wants a Measure A that provides adequate funding for bike projects and ensures we have "Complete Streets" that serve all users, not just those who drive.

"However, the proposed Measure A guarantees no funding for bike projects, aside from funding for the American River Parkway. The expenditure category in which bike projects are lumped has more than a billion dollars worth of needs for Americans with Disability Act compliance, sidewalks, streetscapes and other projects, yet the category allocation is only \$205 million (\$235 million minus \$30 million for the Parkway).

"Therefore, we cannot support the currently proposed Measure A expenditure plan.

"The potential for increasing the number of trips by cycling and walking is great. SACOG's Blueprint Project shows that there can be as many as four times as many bicycle and pedestrian trips as transit trips (16 percent vs. 4 percent in one modeled scenario). Cycling and walking trips are far and away the most cost-effective trips for both government and individuals.

"Increased levels of cycling offer an inexpensive solution to many of our health, energy and transportation problems and will improve our quality of life. Our area continues to suffer from unhealthy air, there is a national obesity crisis due in part to a lack of physical activity by most citizens, an inevitable decline in oil production lies in the future (and may well occur during the life of the measure) and SACOG predicts appalling traffic congestion."

In a positive late step, the Sacramento City Council asked that cyclists and pedestrians be routinely accommodated in all transportation projects funded by Measure A, including transit and road projects. Such accommodation is state and federal policy and should be routine, but the draft ordinance for the measure had no such assurances. The Sacramento Transportation Authority Board still needs to approve this change. ☼

BIKE TO WORK VICTORIA PARTICIPATION UP 37%

*from CenterLines, the e-newsletter of the
National Center for Bicycling & Walking*

Thanks to Linda Saunders of Bike to Work Victoria for this update:

"Here are the final results from Bike to Work Week 10:

- 5,135 cyclists (a 37% increase from last year)
- 828 of these were new commuter cyclists (also a 37% increase from last year)
- 39% of the participants were female, a significantly higher number than the 25% reported nationally."

Editor's note: Sacramento's Commuter Bike Challenge is based on Victoria's successful, decade-old program.

SMART Plan Under Way

The city of Sacramento's Department of Transportation began implementing the South Midtown Area Revitalization and Transportation (SMART) Plan in June. Work is taking place weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The SMART Plan consists of a variety of traffic-control elements strategically placed within the south-Midtown area to enhance public safety and reduce speeds. Residents and businesses approved the SMART Plan in November 2001. The Sacramento City Council approved the Environmental Impact Report in October 2003.

A variety of traffic control elements are scheduled for the area between 15th and 29th streets and L and Q streets. The SMART Plan elements include:

- Stop signs
- Pedestrian islands
- Bulb-outs
- High-visibility crosswalks
- A traffic circle at Capitol Avenue and 25th Street

The project also includes reducing L, N, P and Q streets between 15th and 29th streets from three one-way lanes to two one-way lanes with bicycle lanes and parking. In addition to the SMART Plan improvements, decorative street lighting will be installed in the area bounded by L and P streets and 22nd and 26th streets.

Work is expected to be completed by this winter. Two lanes will remain open throughout the project, unless special circumstances dictate otherwise. All businesses will remain open and access maintained during the SMART Plan implementation. ☼

Back-up Editor Needed

SABA is looking for someone who can fill in when *Squeaky Wheel* volunteer editor Steve Mathias is not available, perhaps a few times a year.

This is what Steve does: Receives articles and photos from the SABA president and executive director. Lays out the articles into a standardized format using Adobe PageMaker software. Fits the copy, photographs and clip art onto the newsletter pages. Proofreads and corrects. After proofing, packages the required files and sends them to the printer. Also converts the newsletter to Adobe Acrobat format, posts this electronic version on the SABA Web site and updates links to it. Sends out e-mails to the electronic newsletter subscribers informing them that they can now go to the Web site and read the latest newsletter.

Steve estimates that he spends from six to eight hours per issue.

If you're interested, please contact SABA volunteer coordinator Larry Robinson at volunteer@sacbike.org. ☼

Tip of the Month

Words of Caution for Mad Cogs, Englishmen and Cyclists ...

By David Takemoto-Weerts

I'm no doctor and would normally hesitate to dispense any medical advice. And this is about as far afield from a cycling topic as I'm likely to stray in this column. However, it's important and timely. As we enter the dog days of summer, all cyclists should heed the advice they've heard over the years about avoiding too much exposure to the sun.

While most cyclists eagerly await the summer months with their added hours of daylight and generally favorable weather conditions, the temptation to spend more time in the saddle brings the risk of overexposure to ultraviolet light. We all know the basic precautions: use an effective sunscreen, cover up the skin with protective clothing when possible and limit exposure when the sun is highest in the sky. But there are additional details that can help prevent painful sunburn, and more importantly, reduce the risk of developing any of the various types of skin cancers.

Eighty percent of skin cancers occur above the neck. For the follically-challenged or skinheads-by-choice, a bandana, Headsweats® or cycling cap worn under a helmet also prevent embarrassing vent-shaped tanning patterns on the scalp!

Experts say that most people don't use enough sunscreen or make other mistakes in applying the various ointments. Also, the difference between sunscreens rated SPF 15 and 30 is only a variation between 93 percent and 96 percent effectiveness. So don't expect to be able to stay in the sun twice as long when using SPF 30 than with SPF 15!

A typical T-shirt has a UPF (a rating system for clothing similar to SPF) of only 5, not enough to prevent sun damage to your skin. Lightweight long-sleeved shirts with high UPF ratings are now available from a number of manufacturers.

There are a number of informative Web sites providing much more expert advice than I ever could hope to. Here's a good one to start with: <http://www.sunsmart.com.au/>. Those Aussies must know a thing or two about this important topic.

I've become much more attentive to the threat of skin cancer since my physician found and removed a basal carcinoma on my back several years ago. A thorough skin check should be part of every physical, and any unusual moles or changes in other skin blemishes are good reasons to schedule a doctor's visit. ☼

David Takemoto-Weerts is the University of California, Davis, bike coordinator and a League of American Bicyclists cycling instructor.





**EMIGRANT TRAILS
BIKE TREK**

The 2004 Emigrant Trails Bike Trek returns to the Sierra foothills for its 18th year of cycling, food and fun! Join 500 riders and volunteers to support clean air, healthy lungs and the elimination of lung disease.

We will start in Apple Hill on Saturday, **September 11** and return Monday, **September 13**, with camping in Plymouth and Coloma. Gourmet catered food, snacks and entertainment are provided.

Your gear is hauled for you and in camp we have swimming, massages, live music, dancing, prizes and a cantina serving beer, wine and margaritas.

The cost of this excellent adventure is \$35 to register and a minimum of \$395 in pre-collected tax-deductible donations. On-line registrations and donations are accepted. Join many of your fellow SABA members and other energetic Trekkers for a fun-filled three days. For more information visit us at www.saclung.org or call 1-800-LUNG-USA. ☉

Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2004

The 13th International Symposium on Walking and Bicycling, also known as Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2004, will be in Victoria, British Columbia, from Sept. 7 through Sept. 10.

Creating Active Communities is the theme of this year's conference. Bicycle-friendly communities are active communities.

The National Center for Bicycling & Walking's biennial symposium typically attracts an international gathering of more than 600 bicycle and pedestrian program specialists, advocates, and government leaders committed to improving conditions for bicycling and walking.

Conference participants include federal, state and local agency staff; engineers; planners; transportation officials; educators; public health specialists; park and recreation managers; and advocates who range from executives of international organizations to lay people with an interest in improving the quality of life and health in their community.

SABA Executive Director Walt Seifert and Executive Committee Member Sue Teranishi will be attending the conference.

You can learn more about Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2004 and register online at <http://www.bikewalk.org/index.htm> ☉

Tower Bridge Update

By Walt Seifert

The Environmental Impact Report for the Tower Bridge sidewalk widening project reveals a new wrinkle that could provide some benefits to cyclists.

In one of the many projects related to the sidewalk widening, the California Department of Transportation will rehabilitate the pavement on the bridge in the spring of 2005. In conjunction with the pavement work, the current plan is to restripe the traffic lanes to 11 feet wide and to add four-foot shoulders on either side of the bridge deck. Currently, there are no shoulders, wider traffic lanes and an empty four-foot median.

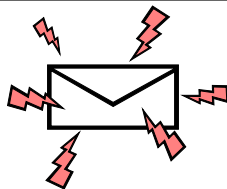
The new shoulders will give cyclists a near-term way to cross the bridge without using the narrow sidewalks. Cyclists now using the sidewalks run into conflicts with other cyclists and pedestrians. Unfortunately, the conflicts with pedestrians will still remain after the sidewalks are widened to 10 feet on each side — at a cost of more than \$9 million.

A four-foot shoulder is not as good as a five-foot-wide bike lane — it is simply too narrow, especially since it is hemmed in on one side by the vertical structure of the bridge. For this reason, SABA is asking that the traffic lanes be restriped to four 10.5-foot lanes or to two 11-foot and two 10-foot lanes. This would give cyclists reasonable room. Not every cyclist would take advantage of the bike lane, but it would mean that riding on the sidewalk wouldn't be the only option. Using the sidewalk for cycling during events at Raley Field really isn't possible because of the volume of pedestrians. ☉

NO EXIT © Andy Singer



Letters to the Editor



We want to hear from you!

Preferably e-mail your letter to: saba@sacbike.org

or mail it to: **SABA**

P.O. Box 1295

Sacramento, CA 95812-1295

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

Editor:

I recall reading something in the SABA newsletter about a \$4 million project to renovate the Tower Bridge to make it more accessible to walkers and bicyclists, but that the project fell through. As a daily walker over the Bridge, I'd like to suggest that walkers use one side and bicyclers the other side, and that stop lights and a walkway be put on the end entering into Sacramento, just like what already exists to allow for passage from the hotel to Old Sacramento. This is a much more feasible project.

Also, speaking as a deaf person, it would be nice to not always have to keep an eye behind me, to make sure I get out of the way of an overly eager bicyclist coming up from behind. I've been rammed into before when I didn't get out of the way. People can be just as rude on a bike as they are in a car.

Mary Yamada

Editor's note: The Tower Bridge sidewalk widening project is still alive. (See related article on page 5.) Pedestrians on one side and cyclists on the other was one of the alternatives to widening considered and rejected. A planned trail under the West Sacramento end of the bridge will allow crossing without a traffic signal.



County Starts Neighborhood Traffic Management Program

By Walt Seifert

Sacramento County is kicking off a neighborhood traffic management program to address problems with speeding, high traffic volume and cut-through traffic.

A citizen advisory committee is being consulted about how the program should be run and what "devices" should be in the program's toolbox. Speed tables can be a way to alert and slow motorists get a bike trail across a street.

Policies will be established on how neighborhoods or streets become eligible for the program, how priorities will be set, how projects get approved (who decides and by what margin) and how funding will be allocated.

The devices generally used to slow traffic deflect it either vertically or horizontally. Speed humps, traffic tables, raised crosswalks and raised intersections all cause motorists to slow by giving them a jolt if they don't. Traffic circles, roundabouts and chicanes (curves) move motorists laterally on the road and limit their line of sight. Changed pavement texture, signs, speed trailers, targeted enforcement and narrowing lanes are other methods used to try to get people to slow down.

Everyone has traffic devices they like and don't like. Cyclists have more problems with some devices than others. When lanes are narrowed, cyclists can get squeezed at traffic circles or curb extensions unless they take the lane. Navigating large roundabouts can require merging that is tough for cyclists. Parabolic speed humps can jar unsuspecting cyclists as well as motorists. (A sinusoidal hump design, more like a roller coaster, is easier on cyclists.)

Overall, though, it appears that traffic calming programs, like Sacramento County's, are beneficial for cyclists. The speed and mass of cars make them lethal. With traffic calming, speed differentials between cars and bikes are reduced. There is more time to react and collisions with cars, if they do happen, are less severe. ☼



REI Supports Bike to Work

By Larry Robinson

REI, a longtime supporter of SABA and its mission of making Sacramento a safe and friendly community for bicycling, came through in a big way for Bike to Work Day in Sacramento on May 20 and Folsom's festivities the following day.

Larry Mesa, outreach coordinator for all three Sacramento-area REIs, gave out more than 1,000 water bottles and hundreds of 20%-off certificates at these two successful cycling events. Thank you, REI, for taking part in the battle for clean air and less congestion in the Sacramento area. ☼

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JULY CONSUMER REPORTS TESTS BIKE HELMETS

from CenterLines, the e-newsletter of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking

According to the June 21st issue of the Helmet Update from the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, "*Consumer Reports* has an article on helmets in their July issue. The article rates 15 adult helmets, eight youth models and six toddler helmets. That is a very small cross-section of the hundreds of models on the market, but it represents the only independent lab test data

publicly available, so it is a major event in the helmet field..."

You can read the article in the July issue of *Consumer Reports*, available at news stands for several weeks and thereafter in your local library or for a fee on the Consumer's Union Web site at: <http://www.consumerreports.org>. ☎

SABA Business and Organization Members

Business members with an * offer SABA members a discount.

- Air Resources Board
- American Lung Association of Sacramento-
Emigrant Trails
- American River Bicycle* (Marconi Ave.)
- American River Bicycle* (Florin Rd.)
- American Warp Drive
- The Bicycle Business
- Bicycles Plus*
- Bob's Cycle Center
- Body Concepts
- Chaney Chiropractic
- City Bicycle Works*
- Cycle California! magazine
- Davis Bike Club
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