



The Squeaky Wheel

Issue No. 17

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

August 2004

From the President Downtown Sacramento Needs Signs To Make Streets Safer for Bikes

By Lea Brooks

In recognition of the need to provide safe and convenient routes for bicyclists and pedestrians, the city of Sacramento is currently implementing the South Midtown Area Revitalization and Transportation (SMART) Plan.

As reported in the July issue of *The Squeaky Wheel*, a variety of traffic control elements will be installed by winter, including 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. Other elements include stop signs, pedestrian islands, bulb-outs, high-visibility crosswalks, and a traffic circle at Capitol Avenue and 25th Street.

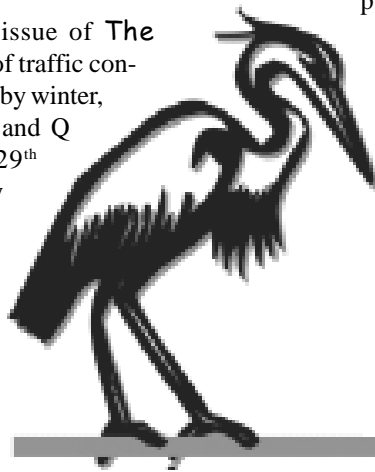
The lane reduction on these one-way streets is a most welcome improvement for bicyclists and a major victory for the neighborhood. SABA is greatly appreciative of the City Council for taking this bold step toward transforming these "high-speed thoroughfares" that encourage contemptible behavior by motorists into streets that are safe and pleasant for cycling and walking.

In another positive step, Sacramento has issued its long-awaited draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed

Show your support for the American River Parkway

The 26th annual Great American River Clean Up is Saturday, Sept. 18 from 9 a.m. to noon. The American River Parkway Foundation sponsors and coordinates the Clean Up. With all the worries this year about the parkway's finances, there's no better time to show you care about Sacramento's jewel.

Last year, more than 1,100 volunteers participated, removing 2,000 bags of trash from the Parkway.



great american river clean up

SABA will be cleaning up our two adopted sites, Mile 8 (starting at 10 a.m.) and the 20th Street Connector/Sacramento Northern Trail (starting at 9 a.m.). We will probably be spreading mulch at 20th Street in addition to picking up trash, so shovels and wheelbarrows would be helpful. Please wear your SABA T-shirt if you have one.

For more information, contact Chad Muilenburg at cmuilenburg@hotmail.com about Mile 8 and Walt Seifert at saba@sacbike.org about the 20th Street Con-

How do I get to...?

By Walt Seifert

New cyclists or cyclists new to the area often ask me, other SABA members, friends, co-workers and acquaintances about the best routes to take. While most routes are pretty straightforward, the ones that aren't can cause some anxiety when being attempted for the first time – and getting lost on a bike can be pretty discouraging. Optimal routes are not always obvious from road maps or bike maps – there may be tricky turns or fairly obscure access points to trails. Sometimes, unfortunately, there really is no good route at all, just the best choice from among poor alternatives.

SABA is taking a small step to deal with this problem. We will be placing on our Web site, sacbike.org, route recommendations for two journeys. One is the Sacramento to Davis jaunt. The other is Elk Grove to Sacramento. These are probably the routes I get the most questions about. Going to Davis, folks are con-

cerned about the route through West Sacramento, finding the Causeway trail and what they do once the Causeway ends. Folks from Elk Grove and other points south of the city of Sacramento wonder if there isn't a route better than the one they are taking or thinking about. (Answer: probably not – north-south routes in our area simply aren't very good.)

We will be unabashedly modeling our Web information on Richard Zipf's excellent Web site (<http://home.att.net/~rfzipf/>)

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

The Squeaky Wheel is published monthly by the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, 909 12th Street, Suite 118, Sacramento, CA 95814. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SABA, P.O. Box 1295, Sacramento CA 95812-1295.

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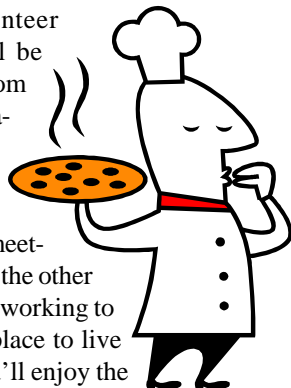
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SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, September 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA National HQ, 909 12th St. Come on down and hang out for a few hours with the rest of the crew. You might just enjoy meeting and talking with some of the other dedicated members who are working to make Sacramento a better place to live and bicycle. We're sure you'll enjoy the pizza and soda!



Welcome new members!

Andre Algazi	Cindy Lunger
Susan Barnes	Russ Mallard
Robert, Kristen & Tess Boutin	Eric McKenna
Polly Brenneman	Steve McKibben
Jed Brewer	Don McNerny
Sigurd Brivkalns	Joy Melnikow
Two Rivers Cider Company	Walter Milhous
Gretchen Daues	Douglas Newcomb
Steve Daues	Ted & Nancy Nissen
Carol Downey	Mary Pauly
Terry Fickies	Max Polin
Jerry Fitch	John Rittenhouse
Leslie T. Fong DDS	Margaret Saito
David Fontana	Tracey Saizan
Robert & Linda Hanna	Henry Saunders
Jason Hartzler	Peter Sharp
Jim & Cecily Hastings	Neil Shoemaker
Kathy Herke	Greg Smith
Ilsa Hess	Yibi Smith
Jeremy Hollis	Ernest Tavella
George Hoover	Peter Thompson
Alan & Jean Jackman	Jane Trippet
Dave Jolly	Emiko Villegas
Walter Kinney	Monique Wind
Ann Kohl	Chung Yee
	Timothy Zindel



Welcome Back

David Ruderman

Routes, from page 1

[BikeRides.htm](#)) on recreational rides in the Sacramento area. (Zipf and his Web site were recently covered in *The Sacramento Bee*. You can see the article at http://www.sacbee.com/content/sports/recreation/cycling_running/story/9992055p-10913460c.html.)

On the SABA Web site, there will be a narrative description of the route, a route sheet with distance information suitable for printing and a map. Maybe someday we'll add pictures.

If you have suggestions for additional routes that ought to be included, please let us know. We hope we can share the valuable experience and expertise of SABA members. We certainly can't provide route information for every origin/destination, but perhaps we can do a top 10 list of rides that people are most concerned about. ☼

A tip of the helmet to Paul Dorn for the description of the Sacramento/Davis route, to Bill Dean and Jim Collins for the Elk Grove/Sacramento information, to Ian Oeser for map work and to Webmaster Michael Baass.

President, from page 1

Freeport Boulevard/21st Street Two-Way Conversion Project. By the time this newsletter is published, the deadline for commenting on the EIR will have passed. While the final design of this project will be decided in the coming months, SABA is hopeful that the City Council will follow its example with the SMART Plan and select the appropriate alternative that will make Freeport Boulevard and 21st Street more accommodating to cyclists.

That brings us to the Central City. Almost two years ago, I pleaded with the City Council in this very column to convert downtown streets now! The city has been studying for what seems forever which downtown streets should be converted from three one-way lanes to two way or reduced to one way with two car lanes and bike lanes. Downtown is currently dominated by streets that make riding a bike or walking unpleasant and intimidating, especially for inexperienced cyclists.

We hope implementation of the SMART Plan will put pressure on the city to pick up the pace on the Central City effort. When the SMART Plan improvements are completed, cyclists will be able to safely reach 15th Street before being dumped into the miserable caldron of fast-moving, aggressive vehicle traffic that we call downtown.

A Notice of Preparation of an EIR for Central City conversion that will ask the public what issues should be addressed in the EIR will have been issued by the time this newsletter is published. The estimated time line for completion of the Notice of Preparation and subsequent development of the EIR is unclear, but the process could take several years!

The Sacramento City-County Bicycle Advisory Committee was recently informed that a separate proposal to convert the existing three one-way lanes on 9th and 10th streets between Broadway and I Street into safe and convenient north-south routes for bicyclists and to convert parts of 5th and G streets is on hold until the City Council reaches a decision on which streets will be included in the Central City conversion project. Ugh.

It is unacceptable that the City Council expects cyclists to continue putting up with threatening motorist behavior, including speeding, unsafe passing maneuvers, honking, verbal taunts and inattentiveness while the study drags on.

Instead, SABA recommends that Sacramento follow in the footsteps of San Francisco by installing signs on key downtown streets that display a bike symbol and text that says "Allowed Use of Full Lane; Change Lanes to Pass," and cite Cali-



Photo by San Francisco Department of Parking & Traffic

fornia Vehicle Code 21202, which permits bicyclists to "take the lane" when necessary to avoid unsafe conditions.

The rationale by the San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic is that the signs educate both motorists and cyclists regarding use of heavily traveled streets that have no bike lanes. In a document on its Web site, the department explained installation of the signs this way: "Bicyclists are expected to ride at least three feet from the edge of the roadway or parked cars. Motorists are also expected to pass bicyclists with a minimum of three feet of clearance. By taking the full lane, cyclists will be more visible, discourage unsafe passing maneuvers by motorists and have more road width to maneuver appropriately around obstacles, debris and potholes."

San Francisco determined the best placement of its signs by collecting data on traffic volume, collision history, speed limits, number of lanes, curb lane width, presence of parking, presence of bus routes and tracks, and other factors. Sacramento can initiate a similar data collection now.

Sacramento is the capital of California and should be setting an example as a livable community for the rest of the state and the nation. Sacramento can do better than allow its spectacular Capitol, park and downtown to be dominated with freeway-like thoroughfares that discourage bicycling and walking. The signs are not a panacea, but a natural follow-up to the SMART Plan. ☼

GARCU, from page 1

nector. If you can bring tools, let Walt know.

Alumni Grove at CSUS will be the check in for Mile 8. SABA will have a check in table at 20th Street.

Volunteers should wear closed shoes, long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Bring hats, sunscreen and water. Volunteers receive a free T-shirt from the American River Parkway Foundation. ☼

SABActions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Sacramento Area Council of Governments Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Sacramento County Neighborhood Transportation Management Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Caltrans on the Tower Bridge Draft Environmental Impact Report
- City of Elk Grove on its Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

SABA member David Takemoto-Weerts sent a letter to the editor of The Sacramento Bee on dooring

Testimony

- SABA testified before the STA Board on Measure A

Other

- One-hour interview with SABA Executive Director on KSFM radio 102.5 public affairs show

Tip of the Month

Dealing with Doors – a Ubiquitous Urban Threat

By David Takemoto-Weerts

A public service announcement video produced for the California Bicycle Coalition has recently sparked a bit of controversy. The 15-second piece can be viewed on-line at <http://www.calbike.org/>. Clearly intended to point up the danger of being doored, the segment depicts a cyclist riding along an urban street and narrowly avoiding a collision when a careless driver opens a car door without checking first for on-coming traffic.

Some have suggested that it should show the cyclist riding clear of the door zone so as to send the message to viewers that taking the lane is the best way to avoid such crashes, as well as being the proactive way to avoid any number of common roadway hazards. In other words, while the message to motorists to take care when opening car doors is important, suggesting that the motorist alone is at fault in this depiction is sending the wrong message.

A recent “Back Seat Driver” column in the Sacramento Bee (June 28) also dealt with dooring and, like the video, emphasized the driver’s responsibility to be careful.



Right place to ride—outside the door zone.



Always unsafe—riding in the door zone

lane at this distance is unnerving, you really have only two safe options: find a different route with more agreeable conditions or, better yet, accustom yourself to “taking the lane” and becoming a “vehicular cyclist.” The California Vehicle Code grants this right to bicyclists. Riders who “take the lane” under these and other potentially hazardous circumstances are not impeding traffic – they are traffic. ☸

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

You are encouraged to decide for yourself if these messages are clear or confusing. But when you’re riding adjacent to parked cars, there is only one safe place to be – clear of those threatening doors. An unexpected opening may result in your crashing into the door, which can cause serious injury, property damage, even death. If you manage to move out of the door’s way in time to avoid it, you may find yourself swerving directly into the path of overtaking motor traffic which may not have time to brake or otherwise avoid colliding with you.

Don’t think that you can see drivers or passengers in parked cars well enough to anticipate their exits. Headrests, dark tinted windows and other obstructions can hide vehicle occupants, especially children who may be even less likely to think of checking before leaving a car.

Three feet away is a minimum safe distance to ride alongside parked cars. If your position in the traffic



Riding in the door zone—the results



You may have seen these "SHARE THE ROAD" signs around California....

....Now the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA) wants to know where YOU would like to see them in OUR area.

Think about those places you ride, or would like to ride, where you might feel more comfortable on your bicycle if a "SHARE THE ROAD" sign was up nearby. It could be a narrow lane, a stretch of road with little or no shoulder, a merge spot, a bad road or trail intersection, a freeway interchange – we know there are plenty of places to choose from.

So please, take a minute to fill out this short form and return it to SABA. We'll compile the results, rank locations and work with local agencies to have signs installed. If you have questions, please call us at 444-6600.

Street, Road or Highway (and address of block if known):

Nearest cross-street(s):

Start and end points of problem area (as close as you can describe):

Direction(s) of travel (describe N/S/E/W, or otherwise):

Describe the problem:

(The following information is optional, but it will help us follow up if we need to.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Please fold this survey in thirds at the ----- lines on other side, add postage and drop it in the mail by September 30.
Or, you can fax it to us at 444-6661. SABA thanks you for your input.

From:

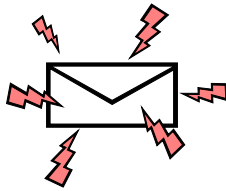
Place
Stamp
Here



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Sacramento, CA 95811-1295

IMPORTANT - "SHARE THE ROAD" INFORMATION

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.

Measure A Tweaked

By Walt Seifert

At the Sacramento Transportation Authority Board's (STA) July 22 meeting, the board voted 13-1 to approve the Measure A ordinance. The ordinance and accompanying expenditure plan will go to voters in November.

The board made several last-minute changes. In a very positive step, it added language recommended by the Sacramento City Council: "Routine accommodation of bicycles and pedestrians shall be included in all transportation projects." SABA was instrumental in getting this language adopted, pointing out it was consistent with both federal and state policy. This policy statement will be a powerful tool if the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are ignored in any Measure A project. We owe thanks to Mayor Heather Fargo and the Sacramento City Council for their leadership and strong support on this issue.

In another change, the board adopted a recommendation by the city of Elk Grove that developer fees on new office, retail and industrial construction be related to their trip generation rates relative to the trip generation rate for single-family residential units. Board members felt this change made the developer fees more defensible in establishing the "nexus" or connection between the fee and transportation costs.

Despite these changes, SABA continues to oppose Measure A. STA board members talked about nobody getting everything they wanted in this measure and the possibility of a future measure that would provide additional funding for all transportation needs. The facts are that this measure will last for 30 years and contains very little for cyclists and pedestrians, but does contain funding for new roads, road widenings, HOV lanes, Paratransit and more money than ever for transit. Though most STA board members seem to agree that another measure is necessary to provide more transportation funding, if and when such a measure would be approved is completely unknown.

It is impossible to improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians with promises – promises that may never be fulfilled. It's very hard not to be cynical, but without money, promises are empty. Sacramento could, and should, do better than this measure. ☹

Diabetes and cycling

By Dr. Francisco Prieto

Before the 20th Century, diabetes was a rare and, for most sufferers, fatal disease. Children and young adults who got Type 1 diabetes rapidly became ill, slipped into coma and died. Adults with Type 2 diabetes could live much longer, but slowly declined until they got an infection they could not fight off, suffered a premature heart attack or also went into coma. With the discovery and isolation of insulin in 1921, and later other treatments for Type 2 diabetes, this became a treatable, but not yet curable, disease.

Unfortunately, changes in our lifestyles have meant that the need for treatment and its cost has almost literally exploded. An estimated 18 million Americans now have diabetes (over 6 percent of the U.S. population), and since 1980, in spite of treatment, deaths due to diabetes have increased by almost 40 percent. The cost of diabetes and related diseases was estimated at \$132 billion in 2002 (direct medical costs and indirect costs from lost work days, disability and early death) and climbing – a cost we all pay part of.

We don't yet know all the reasons for this epidemic, but particularly for Type 2 diabetes (more than 90 percent of all cases), we know many of them. In the past 50 years, Americans became much less likely to do hard physical labor to earn their living. We also became much more likely to drive a car from our front door to the place we work, and less likely to walk, even to a bus or transit stop. We're spending more time than ever in front of our TVs, and less time in active physical pursuits. Food – raw calories – has gotten cheaper and our eating habits have changed for the worse, with the average citizen eating several hundred calories more each day than our parents or grandparents, while burning off less. The resulting obesity drastically increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and even certain cancers, including breast, colon, kidney and uterus.

Is there an answer to this grim picture? Of course: cycling! A landmark national diabetes study (The Diabetes Prevention Program) compared a very effective medication (one that actually helps most who take it to lose weight) to a structured exercise program in people at high risk for diabetes. The medication was very effective, cutting the risk of diabetes by about 25 percent. Exercise? Twice as good, cutting the risk in half. Those of us who ride know how good it makes us feel, but we need to find ways to encourage others to exercise, and to have answers for the excuses we hear every day:

- "No time" – Can't ride (or walk or run or swim) for an hour? Do 30 minutes. Or 10. Anything is better than nothing and is enough to get started.
- "Too tired (especially after work)" – Cyclists know that riders are the least tired people we know. We must spread the word.
- "Don't have/can't afford the right equipment, or gym membership or clothes." – Cyclists may have some blame here, with what we've done to stimulate the sale of fancy lycra clothing, but walking just requires a good pair of shoes, and cycling can be as cheap as that \$10 garage sale Schwinn in my garage or the fancier \$25 one I bought for my son at college (after he finished off his first bike).

And of course there's a very strong final argument: "You're worth it." ☹

SABA

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Share the Road Sign Locations Needed

By Aron Livingston

As reported in the March 2004 *Squeaky Wheel*, SABA's Ad hoc Share the Road Committee continues to frame a Share the Road program for the Sacramento area. Part of that program is picking a sign and soliciting locations. The sign is picked; now we need your comments. Please complete the form between pages 4 and 7 of this newsletter and return it to SABA. We'll compile the results, apply selection criteria and work with local agencies to get signs installed at the selected locations.

Signs are an important first step in a Share the Road program. But SABA envisions a comprehensive program that reinforces the message with education of motorists and bicyclists (including school children), enforcement, publicity of bicyclist fatalities and use of other media, including public service announcements, bumper stickers and, potentially, billboards.

Again, if you have additional ideas for the program or if you would like to join the committee's next meeting, please contact Aron Livingston at (916) 457-7973 or AronL@surewest.net. The committee will soon be finalizing the program description and its components for implementation through grants or other funding. ☉

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Business members with an * offer SABA members a discount.

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