



The Squeaky Wheel

Issue No. 48

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

March 2007

From the President Volunteers Help Make Race a Success

By Lea Brooks

The sight of bicycles, bicycles everywhere when the Amgen Tour of California rolled into downtown Sacramento for the 2 finish of the eight-day bike race was bliss to this cycling fan.

In addition to being a long-time bike commuter, I also have long participated in amateur bicycle racing in Northern California. I often describe myself to my bicycle racing buddies as a "bike commuter who races."

It's not often that these two worlds meet, but on February 20 they did, and the union was delightful.

For several weeks, local media reminded Sacramento-area residents that many downtown streets and area roads would be temporarily closed to accommodate some of the world's best bike racers and encouraged commuters to plan ahead to avoid traffic congestion.

The message that commuters and race fans should take transit or bicycle to avoid traffic congestion could have been louder.

President, page 3

Mendoza Authors SABA Bill; Leno Authors AB1358

By Lea Brooks

SABA's efforts to establish minimum standards for visitor and employee bike parking, showers and clothing lockers at both state-owned and -leased office buildings

City Considers Changing Level of Service Standards

Only a traffic engineer could love Level of Service (LOS), which is the way motorists' driving comfort on the road and at intersections is measured. Too bad traffic engineers don't have the same concern about developing similar measures for cyclists' or pedestrians' comfort.

LOS uses letter grades of A to F to rate traffic conditions. A is free-flowing with no delays — completely unimpeded. F means roads are overcapacity and there are delays at intersections. The city of Sacramento has had a LOS goal of C, a much higher goal than most cities. For example, Sacramento County's urbanized areas and the city of Rancho Cordova already have LOS D goals.

As the city of Sacramento is updating its General Plan, city staff proposed and the City Council agreed that the city should evaluate changing to a citywide LOS goal of D. In the Central Business District and within a quarter mile of light rail stations, the LOS goal

LOS, page 3



The SABA booth was popular with the many cyclists who came to watch the Amgen Stage 2 finish and then dropped by for information. More SABA and Amgen Tour pictures inside.
Photo by William Appleby

took a big step forward earlier this month when Assemblymember Tony Mendoza of Norwalk agreed to sponsor the legislation.

Justin Fanslau, a lobbyist and cycling enthusiast SABA hired to help with its first-ever legislative effort, said that Mendoza

SABA bill, page 3

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. on 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_info@sacbike.com.

The Squeaky Wheel

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SABActions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Complete Streets ad hoc committee
- California Bicycle Coalition legislative committee
- Bike Commute Month planning
- American River Parkway Safety Coalition

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- *The Sacramento Bee* on Highway 50 HOV lanes
- Sacramento County on the General Plan Circulation Element
- Caltrans on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Highway 50 HOV lanes
- Sacramento County Counsel, with a Public Records Act Request and request for determination if county officials violated the Brown Act regarding the Highway 50 Mobility Partnership (see *Public Shut Out of Traffic Planning*, January 2007 newsletter)
- Folsom Cordova Unified School District regarding the Cordova High School football stadium lights' glare on the American River Parkway bike trail in fall and winter months

Testimony

- Before Rancho Cordova City Council on bike/pedestrian overcrossings at Sunrise and Douglas Boulevards

Other Actions

- Site visit and advice to Sacramento International Airport officials on location and style of bike parking
- Provided valet bike parking and had table at Amgen Tour of California

Thank you Wheelmen

The Sacramento Wheelmen made SABA the beneficiary of the proceeds from a silent auction held at the Wheelmen's annual banquet on February 10. Wheelmen President and banquet MC Ralph Lubick extolled SABA's efforts and accomplishments on the behalf of cyclists. SABA Executive Director Walt Seifert was a grateful guest of the Wheelmen at the gathering. ☺

SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, April 12 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA Galactic HQ, 909 12th Street.



This is no April foolin', we really need your help.

President, page 1

But it was obvious that many of the fans who traveled downtown to watch the race finish used pedal power. There were people on expensive road and off-road bikes, one-speed cruisers and recumbents. They were dressed in their finest spandex, jeans and T-shirts, and a few wore costumes.

What I've always loved about cycling is the diversity of riders and their machines whose commonality is pedal power. That diversity was certainly on parade in the capital city.

SABA provided valet bike parking at the Convention Center and staffed a booth at the tour's Lifestyle Festival on 10th Street in front of the State Capitol. Many thanks to all of you who volunteered your time to make the Amgen Tour a success. Some of you also served as race marshals. (See pictures of SABA volunteers on page 5.)

If Sacramento is successful in negotiating a stage finish and/or start in 2008, SABA's hope is that tour organizers will provide us with a more visible location for our valet bike parking and better publicity so cyclists know where they can securely keep their bikes. SABA parked 103 bikes that day.

The Amgen Tour may bring us great benefits down the road. The sight of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli and Mayor Heather Fargo together on the platform with stage winner J.J. Haedo of Team CSC and race leader Levi Leipheimer of Team Discovery surrounded by hundreds of applauding cycling fans was one of opportunity.

As a bicycle advocate, I plan to remind the City Council and Board of Supervisors that a community that hosts a world-class bicycle race deserves world-class bicycle facilities for its residents and visitors.⊗

SABA bill, page 1

agreed to "gut" one of two bills that he had earlier introduced, but that had no chance of succeeding. That bill's language will be replaced with the SABA legislation. At deadline, the bill targeted for resurrection to improve facilities for bicyclists at state office buildings had not yet been identified.

SABA owes many thanks to Assemblymember Mendoza and his staff member, Alma Hernandez. "Most people and groups start looking for authors in October, November and December," Justin explained. "We didn't start seeking an author until late January. It's pretty significant to find an author in such a short period of time."

Mendoza represents the 56th Assembly District, which includes the Southern California cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, Norwalk, Buena Park, Santa Fe Springs, South Whittier and parts of Lakewood and Whittier. His legislative priorities include education and transportation issues.

Finding an author is only the beginning of a long and challenging journey through the legislative process. The next step is for SABA's language to be inserted into the bill. Then the bill will be assigned to committee hearings. With Justin's guidance, SABA will influence the analysis written by committee consultants and lobby the committee members.

SABA will count on its members to write letters of support, ask their co-workers, unions and employers for support, and to attend committee hearings. Please look for opportunities to

support the legislation in future issues of the Squeaky Wheel and on SABA's e-mail list.

SABA also thanks the following members for developing fact sheets on the costs and benefits of providing bike parking vs. automobile parking: Owen Howlett, green buildings; Jeffery Rosenhall, health benefits; Doug Thompson, air quality; and John Whelan, real estate and parking costs.

State office buildings currently provide a wide range of bike facilities, from the Cal/EPA complex in downtown Sacramento—that has a ground-floor indoor bike storage room, electronically keyed entry, and well-kept showers and changing areas—to offices that have no secure bike parking and managers who are hostile to cyclists. Each facility's policies on bicycle parking sometimes change depending on the position of the building manager at the time.

Establishing minimum standards for bike facilities through state legislation would greatly benefit state employees and encourage other public agencies and private companies to provide basic facilities to encourage and support bicycle commuters.

View SABA's guidelines for bike facilities at state buildings at http://sacbike.org/advocacy/state_bicycle_facilities/.

Assemblymember Leno authors Bike Coalition bill

In other exciting legislative news, Justin also reported that Assemblymember Mark Leno of San Francisco has agreed to author legislation by the California Bicycle Coalition. AB 1358, the California Complete Streets Act of 2007, would require cities and counties, upon any revision of their respective general plan circulation elements, to specify how all users of the highway, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, seniors and users of public transportation, will be accommodated.

The bill notes that the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 sets targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in California to slow the onset of human-induced climate change. The California Energy Commission has determined that transportation represents 41 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in California.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2001 National Household Travel Survey, 41 percent of trips in urban areas nationwide are two miles or less in length and 66 percent of urban trips that are one mile or less are made by automobile.

Shifting the transportation mode share from single passenger cars to public transit, bicycling and walking must be a significant part of short- and long-term planning goals if California is to achieve the reduction in the number of vehicle miles traveled and in greenhouse gas emissions required by current law. Bicycling and walking provide the additional benefit of improving public health.⊗

LOS, page 1
would be E.

D and E aren't good grades in school, but LOS D and E aren't awful for motorists. Here are their descriptions:

D: High-density, but stable flow.

E: Operating conditions at or near capacity, unstable flow.

We salute the city for considering this "smart growth" change.⊗

World Changes for Cyclists

By Walt Seifert

In a series of stunning announcements at the national and local levels, the future transportation landscape changed dramatically for cyclists. The announcements have largely escaped the attention of the mainstream media, but if all the changes they herald come to pass, it will have a profound effect on bicyclists and the way people travel.

President George W. Bush led off the changes at a Washington press conference. Bush said his administration is proposing increasing the federal gas tax from 18 cents a gallon to \$3.18 per gallon over a period of six years. Bush explained, "This is the best way to end our oil addiction. It's pretty simple. The tax will ratchet up by 50 cents a year, every year, so people will know it's coming. That'll make them decide to buy different cars and live in different places. Leaders lead, so I'm leading. We'll use the money to promote conservation and better ways to get around, especially bike ridin'."

Congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle hailed the administration's initiative. They were in complete agreement with the change and each other. John Dingell (D-Michigan) said, "Detroit automakers are ready and eager to take on the challenge to make cars more fuel efficient. And if they don't succeed, just about every American needs to get more exercise anyway." John McCain (R-Arizona) asserted, "This is going to make a real difference in the fight against global warming."

Avid cyclist James Oberstar (D-Minnesota) announced that the House Transportation Committee he chairs approved a Complete Streets bill that would require all transportation projects receiving any federal funding to be "safe, convenient and desirable" for all users, including cyclists. "This dream of mine has been a long time coming. We used language that we got from the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates in the bill." The bill also has a provision that would require any project that received federal funding in the past 55 years to be brought up to Complete Street standards. "Sure, it's going cost something, but it's worth it," Oberstar added.

In California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said he was selling his Hummer. "I'm older. I'm smarter," Schwarzenegger said. "I'm no girly-man, but that Terminator image does not fit anymore. Maria has been saying I haven't been getting to the gym, so I'll get my workout and get around by riding a bike. I've got a new Breezer town bike from California. It's fantastic!"

Caltrans Director David Takemoto-Weerts, newly appointed to his post by Schwarzenegger, promised to give the governor riding tips. He said, "This governor is more about action than empty symbolic gestures, but replacing his Hummer with a two-wheeler combines the best of both."

Takemoto-Weerts, previously bike coordinator at University of California, Davis, said he expected to have the governor's requested Caltrans plan for dismantling urban freeways in final form within the month. "We think there is great opportunity for transit, bike trails and mixed-use development in the old freeway rights of way. And we're thinking the sunken "boat" section of I-5 near Old Sacramento could be turned into a water feature with paddleboats, river otter shows, sturgeon pens and fly fishing demonstrations. I know the tourists will appreciate how much more quiet and peaceful it will be. It will be a great

addition to the Riverfront Plan."

In Sacramento, there were changes at the regional and city level. Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Director Mike McKeever said SACOG had revamped funding priorities in the new Metropolitan Transportation Plan. "We looked at historic spending patterns, and transit was getting about 40 percent of the money, but we were only getting about 2 percent of the trips made by transit. That just didn't make sense. Plus the public was clamoring for more human-powered sustainable transportation, so we're going to set aside 40 percent of the money to bike/pedestrian projects over the next quarter of a century or so — and see how that works out."

Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo announced the city of Sacramento was jettisoning its recently adopted Central City Parking Master Plan. "We really appreciate all the efforts everyone put into the plan, but when we looked at the long-term consequences, we felt it conflicted with our desire to make Sacramento the most livable city in America." Instead the city will start banning motor vehicle traffic downtown, except for buses, and begin eliminating all public and private parking in the central city. The car-free area will start small, but increase in size each year. "We expect the millions of square feet devoted to parking in the central city to be razed and filled in," the mayor said. "That will accommodate much of our region's growth. We will keep about 5 percent of the space for bicycle parking."

SABA President Lea Brooks appeared shaken by the developments. She said she would be asking the SABA Board whether it still was necessary to have a bicycle advocacy organization. "I think our work is done. I'll really miss doing my newsletter column and going to meetings, but there's not much left for advocates to ask for. Maybe, though, we should think about beefing up our valet bike parking program."

Happy April Fools Day! ☼



Pedal power was very much the order of the day at the Amgen Stage 2 festival. Photo by Robert James

More Amgen Tour photos...



The SABA booth crew. From left, Rhonda Hurst, Sue Teranishi and Jackie Stone. Photo by Lea Brooks



Valet parkers, from left, Mike Savino, Jerry Shupe, Ed Cox, Dennis Wright, John Buchanan, Pat Mackin and George Raya. Photo by Lea Brooks



One of several shifts of valet parkers. From left, Ken Fuller, Dave Brubaker and Tom Higgins. Photo by Lea Brooks



A steady stream of riders came and went from the SABA valet parking. Photo by Robert James



From left, Ernie Long, Audrey Medina, Lynn Gray and Tad Bell. Photo by Lea Brooks



Valet parkers in action. Photo by Robert James

Two-Way Conversion On March 20 Agenda

After several delays, the Central City Two-Way Conversion Study presentation to the Sacramento City Council is now scheduled for 7 p.m. on March 20 in the council chambers at 915 I Street.

On the plus side, city staff recommends reducing 19th and 21st streets from three lanes to two and adding bike lanes. SABA strongly supports these changes and urges quick implementation.

SABA, which supports efforts to reduce traffic lanes, slow traffic and restore streets to two-way operation, is disappointed and concerned regarding what was left out of this study. It failed to address the lack of safe and convenient bike routes for bicyclists in the downtown business district.

After the City Council takes action on this study, SABA will reiterate its request to develop a downtown bikeway network. The need for safe bikeways downtown is more apparent than ever, especially with the city's recent approval of a number of high-rise and high-density developments. Residents of these new developments are more likely to choose bicycling and walking for short trips if they feel safe.

SABA members who live in the city and want safer bicycling conditions downtown should attend this meeting to voice their opinion or write to their council member at 915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

To see a copy of SABA's letter to the council regarding the Two-Way Conversion Study, see www.sacbike.org. ☼

May 1 Kick-off/Show-off Ride

Bike Commute Month will start with a press conference and ride on Tuesday, May 1. Mark your calendars now to hold that date. Not only will riders get to stretch their legs and help remind everyone that May is Bike Commute and Million Mile Month, they will have the opportunity to experience some interesting new bike trails. SABA, the Sacramento Wheelmen and Sacramento Bike Hikers are jointly organizing the ride.

Following the pattern of last year's event, the press conference will be at St. Rose of Lima Park, 7th and K streets. The Kick-off/Show-off ride will start around noon, immediately following the press conference and again showcase a number of new and planned bike facilities. There will be short stops for docent and city alternate modes coordinator Ed Cox to tell everyone about what's happening.

This year there will be short and long ride options. The short ride will head north to the new Two Rivers Trail and head back into town via Old Sacramento.

The long ride will peel off at the Jibboom Street Bridge. It will then backtrack on the north side of the American River and hook up with the new Ueda Parkway Trail.

Planning for the rides is not complete, but we expect the short ride to be less than 10 miles and the long ride to be more than 20 miles.

Both ride options will end up at 11th and K streets, where the California Bicycle Coalition will be having a vendor fair in conjunction with its Pedal Power lobbying days. ☼

SABA Makes a Difference

By Walt Seifert

It was a strange night in Rancho Cordova. Bicycle and pedestrian advocates argued against bicycle/pedestrian overcrossings. Cycling and walking advocates agreed with developers. Cats and dogs were living together.

Neighbors living near the proposed Anatolia Marketplace who testified before the council were clear on one thing: They want to shop close to their new homes soon, rather than drive to Folsom or Elk Grove. They are tired of waiting.

The issue was whether Anatolia Marketplace developers should provide an easement on their land so the city of Rancho Cordova could, someday, build one or more overcrossings at the intersection of Sunrise and Douglas boulevards. The developers of the Marketplace, a proposed Raley's-anchored collection of shops on the southeast corner of the intersection, didn't want the overcrossings blocking the view of their center.

Rancho Cordova city staff and council members were worried about the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists trying to get across Sunrise and Douglas, each with six through lanes of traffic plus additional left and right turn lanes at the intersection. The city manager worried that pedestrians crossing the street would slow down traffic.

SABA and WalkSacramento worried about the expense of the overcrossings and whether people would be willing to use them, climbing steps or using switchback ramps, instead of crossing at grade level. Both organizations made it clear that overcrossings for nearby trails might be a good thing, but that letting people cross the street without having to go up one story in height and then down another, was better at the intersection. The enormous costs projected for the overcrossings — \$3 million to \$7 million each — would be better spent on making the intersection safer. Yet there's no question that Douglas and Sunrise will remain inhospitable, incomplete streets even with intersection changes.

It was complicated. It was messy. It was a difficult call for the council, but in the end it directed city staff and the developer to come back with plans for an intersection that can be crossed safely at grade and to examine other nearby spots where crossings of Sunrise and Douglas might be suitable. ☼

Walk/Bike California Conference To Be Held in Davis

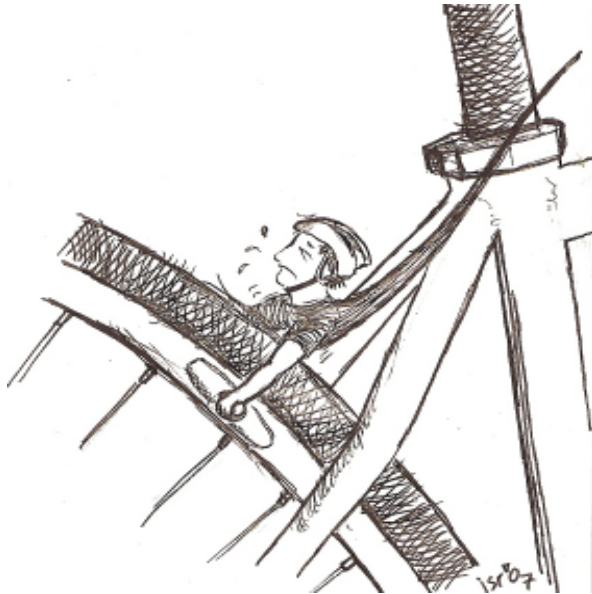
The third biennial Walk/Bike California Conference will be held September 11-14 in Davis. Whether your interest is engineering, planning, public health, livable communities, safety, education, legislation or transportation reform, Walk/Bike California 2007 is an essential conference to share your work, network with colleagues and meet those who are funding and creating an exciting movement that is changing the way Californians live. The conference will feature informational sessions, workshops and mobile tours on walking and bicycling topics.

Walk/Bike California 2007 is hosted by the California Bicycle Coalition in association with California Walks. The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals *Professional Development Seminar* will be held concurrently. ☼

Tip of the Month "Braking Away!"

David Takemoto-Weerts

Using your brakes —how difficult can it be? You just squeeze those two brake levers and come to a stop – using more force if you must stop quickly, right? Well, that basic technique must be fairly effective, otherwise we'd probably hear about a lot more bike crashes than we do. However, a little knowledge and technique will go a long way to improving your safety in those inevitable special situations where the "grab tight and



hold on" method doesn't do the best job.

As most cyclists quickly learn, front brakes are much more effective stoppers than the rear. Some basic physics is involved there, but a cutthroat editor prohibits such in-depth analysis. Suffice it to say that applying only the front brake usually provides sufficient stopping power, but then you're likely to do a "header," being thrown forward over the bars and onto your noggin. Using the rear brake only will eliminate any chance of such aerial antics, but will not stop you very quickly at all and result in a tire-abrading skid that may well cause loss of control.

The proper technique in "panic stop" situations is to apply about three times more force on the front brake lever than on the rear. The rear brake's primary function is to prevent the header and allow the front brake to do the work it's intended to. If you feel the rear wheel beginning to skid, reduce or release the front brake pressure briefly until the skidding ceases. To further reduce the header risk, as when performing a quick stop on a steep descent, push your butt off the back of the saddle to move the center of gravity aft. Be careful not to go too far astern and drop your "poop deck" on the rear tire! Enough misappropriated nautical terminology!

It's best not to begin "practicing" these skills when a careless driver whom you don't want to "meet" (literally) is making a sudden turn in front of you. Go to an empty parking lot or quiet side street, wear your helmet and learn under controlled conditions.

Remember, braking effectiveness is reduced under wet con-

ditions. Lightly apply your brakes in advance of intersections or other predictable stops to whisk some water away – you'll stop faster. On slippery surfaces or turns, use the rear brake gingerly and the front brake only as necessary. If the front wheel skids, you're down. If possible, anticipate slick patches and slow down – don't fall down!⊗

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

Illustration by Jeffery Rosenhall

Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates Membership Application

Please fill in, include your check payable to "SABA," and mail to:

SABA
909 12th Street, Suite 114
Sacramento, CA 95814

I want to be a part of an organization that is doing things for cyclists and the community.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (home): (____) _____ - _____

Phone (work): (____) _____ - _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership level:

- \$1000 Legacy Club*
- \$500 Leadership Circle*
- \$100 Century*
- \$75 Business/Group*
- \$75 Sustaining*
- \$50 Sponsoring
- \$40 Family
- \$30 Individual

* Free T-shirt – indicate size below

Money's not enough! Contact me about volunteering.

I must have a SABA T-shirt! Shirts are \$15 each.

Size: S M L XL

Members, please share with a friend or acquaintance.

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Dream On! See page 4.

Stage 2 Amgen Tour Complete Success



Stage 2 winner Levi Leipheimer powers toward the finish. Shown at right is the coveted yellow jersey at the VIP table. Photos by Robert James