Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
SABA
Making Sacramento a cycling capital

The Squeaky Wheel

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From the President
No One Solution to Getting People Out of Cars

By Lea Brooks

What will it take to get people out of their cars and on bicycles and on foot for transportation, especially for short trips?

The answer to that question, which has profound implications for the obesity epidemic and climate change, was posed numerous times during the Walk/Bike California 2007 Conference last month at the University of California, Davis. (Please see Walt Seifert's related story, *Walk/Bike California Conference*, on page 4.)

The consensus at the conference was that there is no one answer. Reversing society's dependence on and preference for motor vehicles over bicycling, walking and transit will take a combination of education, incentives, disincentives, promotion, motivation and physical changes to our communities. It will also take political will.

Lisa Cirill of the California Department of Public Health's Center for Physical Activity, one of the keynote speakers, noted, "Nobody is going to walk or bike if it's not safe."

Dr. Richard Jackson, former state public health officer who is now affiliated with the University of California at Berkeley, said, "The more time you spend in a car, the more likely you are to be obese."

The most recent data on Sacramento-area urban commuters was published Sept. 19 in *The Sacramento Bee*. According to a report by Texas A&M University's Texas Traffic Institute, Sacramento commuters spent 41 hours stuck in traffic in 2005. That figure is up an hour from the previous year and added up to 30 wasted gallons of gasoline per Sacramento commuter, according to the article.

President, page 3

No Decision on No Burn Days

By Walt Seifert

A split Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District Board kicked the can down the road at its September meeting. Instead of deciding whether or not to adopt a rule allowing the district to impose "no burn days" on wood-burning devices such as fireplaces, the board asked its staff to come back with options for a voluntary, instead of mandatory, program and with a possible exemption for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-certified fireplace inserts and pellets stoves.

The staff proposed to establish a rule authorizing a ban on wood burning on days when particulate pollution would likely exceed federal standards. The estimate was that between eight to 30 no burn days would be imposed each winter. Enforcement was to be based on visible smoke.

There was a great deal of testimony from fireplace and stove-related businesses, including wood sellers and suppliers of manufactured logs. Health experts testified about studies that show tiny wood smoke particles lodge deep in the lung, aggravate diseases such as asthma and even enter the blood stream and contribute to cardiovascular disease and premature death. The increasingly substantial evidence from scientific studies prompted the U.S. EPA to nearly halve its limits on particulates.

Testifying for SABA, I said that bicyclists are physically active year round, breathe deeply and that we did not want to breath particulates, big or small, visible or invisible — that our desire was pure, unadulterated air, not air that was semi-clean. I noted that the primary issue for the board's decision should not be the aesthetics, cost savings or energy consequences of wood burning but the health impacts.⊛.

Bike Lanes in Midtown Multiply

By Walt Seifert

They say good things are worth waiting for. Six years of meetings, analysis, plans and reports about central city two-way conversion culminated for cyclists in a couple weekends of work that transformed two streets.

Midtown Sacramento now has highly functional bike lanes on 19th and 21st streets –long sought north/south connections for bicyclists.

Cyclist heads north on 21st Sreet near J Street. Additional photo page 3. Photo by Jerry Plummer

The two one-way streets have been repaved and restriped. They now have two lanes for automobile traffic instead of three and sport bike lanes on each side. The bike lanes run from W to H Street on 21st and from H to Broadway on 19th. That's more than 2.5

Bike Lanes, 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
- Los Rios Community Colleges bike/pedestrian access (three meetings)
- Breathe California Policy Committee

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Sacramento City Council on Phase II of Two Rivers Trail
- Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on budget and parkway rangers
- City of Sacramento Planning Commission on Greenbriar project
- Sacramento City Council on "Going for the Gold" and Central Business District bikeways
- Galt Planning Department on Galt General Plan

Testimony

- Local Agency Formation Commission on Greenbriar project
- SMAQMD board on no burn days to limit wood smoke

Other

- Provided valet bike parking at Walk/Bike California 2007 Conference in Davis
- Evaluated Los Rios Community College campuses for bike access
- Attended Walk/Bike California 2007 conference, Sept. 11-14
- Participated in Great American River Clean-Up

Walking Machine

In 1817, Baron von Drais invented a walking machine that would help him get around the royal gardens faster: two same-size in-line wheels, the front one steerable, mounted in a frame which you straddled. The device was propelled by pushing your feet against the ground, thus rolling yourself and the device forward in a sort of gliding walk. *Source: Pedaling History Museum* http://www.pedalinghistory.com/PHhistory.html.

SABA Pizza Party— Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, Nov. 8 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA Interstellar HQ, 909 12th Street.

Come join us and check out SABA's new office, Suite 116, eat some pizza, and do stuff.

President, from page 1

Planners quoted in *The Sacramento Bee* story said that the fight against congestion requires building better communities, not just more roads.

At the walk/bike conference, Lynne Goldsmith of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) acknowledged that Los Angeles once believed it could build itself out of traffic congestion. No longer. "Building new roads does not alleviate long-term congestion," she said, noting that the MTA is now focusing on integrating all transportation modes, including bicycling.

Los Angeles County faces numerous challenges as it attempts to get people out of their cars, including changing the stigma that bicycling is only for poor people. According to Tony Jusay, also with MTA, most bicyclists in the county are weekend riders who drive somewhere else to ride.

Researchers at the walk/bike conference said more research is needed to determine who walks and cycles and why and what measures must be taken to motivate others to do the same. Land-use mix, distance to destinations and individual preference all seem to make a difference.

James Sallis of the Active Living Research Program at San Diego State University said that promoting exercise alone to improve health has not been successful. "Having a trail doesn't mean people will use it," he said. "You also need to motivate and provide incentives. Create an environment that makes it easy to be active and then encourage people to use it."

What is known, according to Sallis, is that aesthetics and proximity of recreational trails to housing is important, children who live in walkable neighborhoods are twice as likely to cycle or walk to school, people are less likely to be obese if they live in a walkable community and that there are not enough walkable communities for the number of people who want to live in one.

Susan Handy with the UC Davis Department of Environmental Science and Policy and Institute of Transportation Studies said more research is needed to determine "what factors explain why a person does or doesn't walk or cycle. We can't say changes in the built environment will necessarily lead to an increase in walking and cycling, but there won't be an increase in these activities without changes. And changes will result in the opportunity for more walking and bicycling."

More and consistent data are also needed on where bicycle and pedestrian activities are taking place, what facilities are missing that would increase the number of bicyclists and pedestrians, and where and why crashes occur.

Larry Green, executive director of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, provided an example of how incentives and disincentives significantly reduced the number of employees driving alone to work after the district office moved from the suburbs where parking was free to downtown Sacramento. Employees who take transit get reimbursement for their fares, those who bicycle or walk receive $4.20 per day and parking for solo motorists costs $70 per month. The result is that 80 percent of employees now bike, walk, take transit or carpool.

As advocates, we must continue our efforts to persuade policy makers to take seriously the human and financial costs of inactivity-related health problems and the effect of greenhouse gases, especially from transportation, when making land use and transportation decisions. We also need better data to determine what works and what doesn't work.

At stake is our quality of life and the future of our planet. Anyone who has had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Jackson speak knows he always closes with this quote: "We owe our children a world that is at least as beautiful, healthful and diverse as the one we were given."

19th Street looking north showing new bike lanes on both sides of the street. Photo by Jerry Plummer

Bike Lanes, from page 1

miles of new bike lanes in the heart of midtown along streets that are full of shops, restaurants and other prime destinations.

They say that the best things in life are free. The cost of converting 19th and 21st streets wasn't quite zero, but it was negligible. It was astonishing how quickly the actual physical work was done.

It really is incredible how inexpensive bicycle infrastructure can be. The bicycle components of this project, namely bike lane stripes and pavement markings, added virtually no cost as the streets had to be restriped anyway after regularly scheduled resurfacing work. Despite the lack of costs, there's little doubt the conversion will be a boon to bicyclists.

Midtown is turning into a bicyclist's dream. The grid system of streets, mature shade trees and great places to go were already there. Now bike lanes in all directions make it very good for bicyclists. Slower traffic is good for merchants and is safer for neighborhood residents–and for motorists, to boot. All that's needed now is more bike parking (which might be coming soon), a good connection across the river to the Arden Fair/Cal Expo area and to the American River Parkway via a bridge over the American River and extension of the Two Rivers Trail.

Many thanks to Councilman Steve Cohn for his leadership. Thanks go to the rest of the city council for their approval of the "two-way conversion" project. Thanks also go to SABA volunteer Chris Morfas for his participation in early stakeholder meetings and to other SABA members who voiced their opinions as the project wound its way through the system.

It's time to celebrate! Next up, we hope, is a plan to make downtown streets better for cyclists.

Walk/Bike California Conference

By Walt Seifert

Cycling and walking advocates and planners gathered in Davis Sept. 11-14 for the third biennial conference on biking and walking. The conference was a joint effort of the California Bicycle Coalition, California Walks and the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals.

More than 400 advocates, professionals and others, including Caltrans Director Will Kempton and U.S. Rep. James L. Oberstar, were in attendance. Oberstar is chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and a champion in Congress for bicycling.

There were dozens of workshops, rides, walking tours, presentations and a film festival featuring films showing some form of alternative transportation. Conferences are a great way to share, learn and get energized — not that most advocates aren't already passionate about their work.

Former California Public Health Officer Dr. Richard Jackson gave a great presentation on the link between the lack of physical activity and obesity, diabetes and health care costs. There is no question that the lack of physical activity and related poor community design that discourages walking and biking are huge, multi-billion-dollar problems—problems that are truly a matter of life and death. His presentation is something every elected official in the state and country should see.

Conferees learned that bike lanes started in Davis 40 years ago and got to meet some of the pioneers who made it happen. In-state and out-of-state attendees were equally impressed by the stellar bicycle conditions in Davis and the extraordinary number of cyclists, even though the University of California, Davis, was not yet in session. It was hard not to be impressed watching the throngs of bicyclists at the Davis Farmers' Market. Davis has made a commitment to be inviting to cyclists,

There were many attendees from the Sacramento area, including SABA board members Lea Brooks, Scott Clark and Tony Powers.

Letters to the Editor

Editor

While reading Lea Brooks' article on children riding bikes to school, I could not help but reminisce about riding to school and beyond in my own youth (the only hint is mid 1950s!). One thing that was definitely not at the schoolyard when I pulled up was a line of SUVs, motors running, waiting to drop off or pick up the kids! Are those same mothers as scared about global warming as they are about perverts in the neighborhood?

On green waste containerization … One of the first things we need to do is quit calling it *waste*. The leaves and grass clippings we toss out in the gutter can be one of the best *resources* we have for healthy landscapes. By using it for mulch and composting, we can develop good soil, conserve water, and use less fertilizers and pesticides. Less on the street and healthier landscapes. This sounds like a win/win deal to me. Learn more by checking out the River Friendly Landscape Guidelines at www.riverfriendly.org. Remember … the reason they are called **leaves** is because you **leave** them!

David Roberts

SABA's Bill Hijacked

By Walt Seifert

SABA's bill to establish minimum standards for bicycle facilities in state office buildings came to a sad, ignominious and vastly disappointing end. First, instead of being heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee as scheduled, it was ignored and not voted on. Then, the bill was shunted to the Rules Committee. Next, cruelest of all, it was "gutted and amended," stripped completely of its bicycle content and turned into a bill about chiropractors.

AB 163, as a bicycle bill, had no organized opposition and no apparent opposition from within the Schwarzenegger administration. Caltrans actively supported the purposes of the bill. The bill eased its way through the Assembly and was poised to be heard by Senate Appropriations, chaired by bicycle-supporter Tom Torlaksen. Then the vagaries of legislative politics kicked in and SABA, and state employees who bike or would like to bike, was left holding the bag. A bag that was decidedly empty.

For whatever reason, we didn't have the juice. Live and learn. Right now, it appears SABA will pursue non-legislative ways to try to achieve the same results — good bike parking, showers and clothing lockers at state office buildings. At least one agency, Caltrans, is working on its own to establish a policy for good bicycle facilities at its buildings. Legislation could have made things easy and avoided an agency-by-agency approach, but there may be more than one way to reach the goal.

California Bicycle Legislation

The 2007 legislative session is over. Some legislation supported by the California Bicycle Coalition and SABA made it through the Legislature to the governor's desk. The governor may sign or veto the bills.

These bills are awaiting the governor's signature:

- AB 57 (Soto) Safe Routes to School.
- AB 478 (Wolk) Night Illumination.
- AB 1581 (Fuller) Traffic-actuated signals: bicycles: motorcycles.

Bills that will be held over to the next legislative session starting in January 2008 are:

- AB 1358 (Leno) The Complete Streets Act.
- AB 211 (Jones) Local Health Officers (formerly AB 437).
- AB 1472 (Leno/DeSaulnier) Public Health: California Healthy Places Act of 2008.

SB 33 (Simitian) Teen Cell Phone Use, a bill that has implications for bicyclists' safety, was signed into law by the governor.

Two bills that died, besides SABA's AB 163 for bicycle facilities at state offices, were AB 534 (Smyth) Bicycle Transportation Account, which would have increased state funding for bicycle projects, and AB 60 (Nava) Safe Passing Distance, which would have required vehicles to pass bicycles at a minimum distance of three feet. According to the California Bicycle Coalition, the good news is that the finally-approved State budget funds the Bicycle Transportation Account at $7.2 million this year, $2.2 million more than required according to the California Bicycle Coalition..

Huge Turnout for American River Clean-Up

More than 30 volunteers showed up at the Sacramento Northern Bikeway trailhead on C Street between 19th and 20th streets Sept.15 for the annual American River Parkway Foundation's Great American River Clean-Up. Another six volunteers worked at SABA's adopted Mile 8 on the bike trail.

Many thanks to Mark Tavianini for coordinating the volunteers at the Sacramento Northern Bikeway. They picked up bags and bags of debris that included cardboard, bottles, cans, plastic containers of all sizes, paper, cigarette butts and discarded bedding and clothing, some of it soiled with human waste.

There was less trash in this area than previous years, possibly due to Sacramento County's ban on alcohol and shopping carts in an attempt to reduce the amount of debris carried in by illegal campers.

We also thank Dennis King, who coordinated the trash pickup along Mile 8.

In addition to Dennis, volunteers at both sites who are not pictured: Matthias Kimball, Angela York, Steve Passal, Lamaia Coleman, Afshin Coleman, Kent Teifer, Pat Larson, Rebecca Goertner, Becky Yee, Gerald Shupe, Diane Van Baren, Rose Banks, Russell Henly, Bill Dean, Marguerite Dean, Marie Schelling, Judy Boers, Greg Boers, Philip Lantz, Dan Pskowski and Lea Brooks.

From left, Gianna Jordan, Laura Rubin, Brianne O'Rourke, Brendan McVeigh, Ernie Isaacs. All photos by Lea Brooks

From left, Marge Gessner, Carol Greenwood and Daisy Mah.

From left, Anthony Tavianini, Mark Tavianini, Walt Seifert, David Azevedo, Bill Vanderslice, Skip Amerine, Sue Teranishi and John Hickey.

From left, Jack, Monica and Annabella Feltzer.

SABA Potluck Oct. 24

Please mark your calendars for SABA's quarterly general membership meeting and potluck on Wednesday, Oct. 24. We have two guest speakers, including SABA member Jack Sanders who will discuss lessons learned in dealing with the aftermath of his recent crash caused by a motorist.

Lauren Hilliard, a recent University of California, Davis, graduate and consultant for Fehr and Peers Associates, will give a presentation on the city of Freiburg, Germany, which is bicycle-friendly thanks to a coalition of environmentalists and conservatives. Conservatives were motivated to save money. A December 2006 article in the Christian Science Monitor described Freiburg as "Germany's best-known environmentally-friendly neighborhood and a successful experiment in green urban living."

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in Breathe California's large conference room at 909 12th Street. Guests are welcome and bikes are allowed in the conference room. Please bring a main dish, salad or desert to share. SABA will supply plates, napkins and utensils.

SABA Counts Bikes

By Walt Seifert

SABA achieved a historic first by conducting a bike count on Thursday, Sept. 20. SABA counted bicyclists at the corner of 19th Street and Capitol Avenue trying to get "before" data prior to the three- to two-lane conversion of 19th Street in midtown Sacramento.

SABA's count was inspired by San Francisco advocates who have trumpeted a 144 percent increase in bicyclists on Valencia Street in the year after bike lanes were installed there in 1999.

Cyclists on both 19th Street and on Capitol Avenue were counted. The number of riders on each street was roughly the same. Capitol has had bike lanes for many years; 19th Street will have bike lanes added by the time you read this.

We counted 138 bicyclists during the peak hour period 3 to 7 p.m. That's more than one cyclist every two minutes. Surprisingly, the number of cyclists per hour was fairly constant over the four-hour period. Seventy percent of the cyclists were male. Three-quarters were not wearing a helmet. More than a third of the cyclists were riding on the sidewalk. All of the northbound riders on 19th Street, which is one-way southbound, were on the sidewalk, but many other riders were on the sidewalk as well on both 19th and Capitol.

We'll be checking back at a later date, perhaps in six months or a year, to see if there is an increase in ridership.

Here are the numbers:

Total cyclists: 138 (1.1 every two minutes)

By hour
3-3:59 p.m.: 29 (21%)
4-4:59 p.m.: 34 (25%)
5-5:59 p.m.: 43 (31%)
6-6:59 p.m.: 32 (23%)

Male: 96 (70%)
Female: 42 (30%)

19th Street
Northbound: 17 (12%)
Southbound: 48 (35%)

Capitol Avenue
Eastbound: 46 (33%)
Westbound: 27 (20%)

Not wearing helmet: 107 (76%)
Riding on sidewalk: 56 (35%)

Meters Morph to bike racks?

The city of Sacramento is investigating turning parking meter poles into bike racks. There are now a lot of unused meter poles as the city has switched from individual meters to parking kiosks on downtown and midtown streets.

The city is considering installing 50 modification kits to the meter poles that would convert them to bike racks. There are several different styles and manufacturers of conversion kits, but the universal theme is add "ears" to the poles that both help support bike frames and make it easier to use any kind of lock.

SABA may get involved by helping select prime locations for the new racks.

Help Stop HOV Lanes

In the August Squeaky Wheel, we reported on the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) and Neighbors Advocating Sustainable Transportation (NAST) lawsuit against Caltrans over the adequacy of its environmental impact report (EIR) for the widening of Highway 50. SABA is a member of both ECOS and NAST.

The lawsuit contends the final EIR did not fully address all the consequences of the HOV lane project, including sprawl-induced increases in greenhouse gases, vehicle miles traveled and air quality degradation. Also, while Caltrans has publicly stated it intends to expand the freeway all the way downtown, the EIR examined impacts only at segments from Sunrise Boulevard to Watt Avenue and from Sunrise to Highway 99.

Litigation is expensive, and ECOS and NAST need financial assistance. If you support this effort, please send a check now. Every contribution, large or small, helps. Friends of ECOS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is accepting donations specifically for this lawsuit. Mark your check "Highway 50 litigation fund" and send it to:

Friends of ECOS
909 12th St., Suite 100
Sacramento CA 95814

Donations are tax deductible.

Supporters of the litigation may also send checks directly to attorney Don Mooney. If the ECOS/NAST lawsuit is successful and Caltrans is required to pay attorney fees, money sent to Mooney will be returned. These contributions, though potentially refundable, are not tax deductible. Send to:

Donald Mooney
129 C St., Suite 2
Davis CA 95616

Mark your check "ECOS/NAST lawsuit."

This project will have effects on the environment, quality of life and levels of bicycling in our region for generations to come. For information: http://nastsacramento.blogspot.com/.

The bike cage in the California Department of Public Health's parking garage was heavily damaged on Sept. 30 when a drunk driver in an SUV lost control and ripped down part of the cyclone fence, popped off steel support poles, wrenched the ribbon-style rack from its anchors and destroyed or damaged four bicycles. The Department of General Services, which manages the garage, was seeking bids in early October for repairs. Photo by Philip Wright

Tip of the Month
Ridin' the Range

By David Takemoto-Weerts

Many cyclists would be better off ridin' the range. No, not astride ol' Paint roundin' up stray doggies. I mean using one's full range of available gearing, or at least shifting enough to most efficiently handle one's usual cycling conditions.

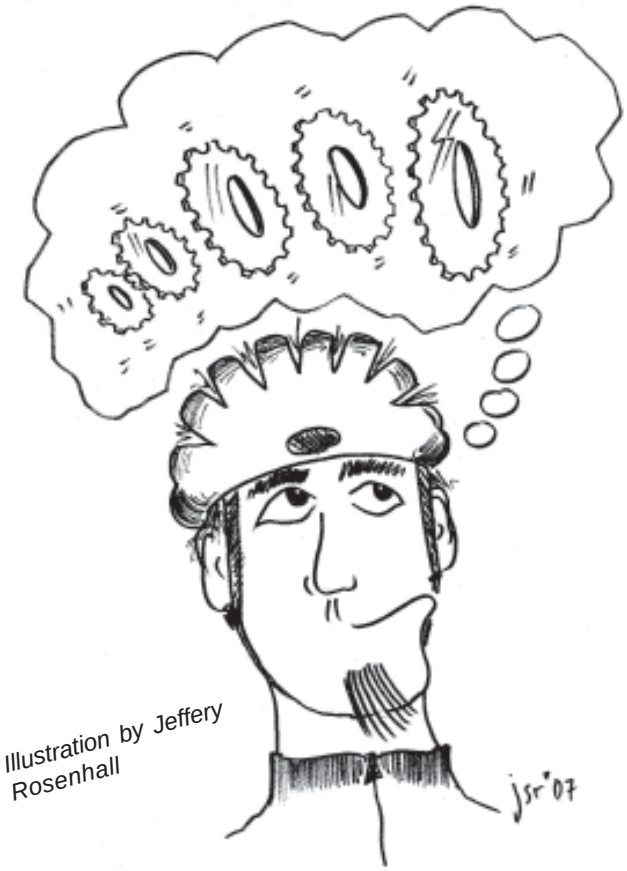

Illustration by Jeffery Rosenhall

Wrenching in the UC Davis Bike Barn many years ago, I was struck by the high number of freewheels we had to replace because the small cog teeth had worn down so much that the chain would skip consistently

I soon realized that most of the "10 speeds" and other cheaper multi-geared bikes tended to be ridden constantly with the chain on the small rear cog and the small front chain ring. Not only did it seem counterproductive to be pedaling in both the "high" and "low" gears at the same time, it also placed undo wear on the rear small cog that has the fewest number of teeth to "share the load" imparted by the chain day in and day out.

But, I also understood that this particular gear combination was ideally suited for topographically challenged ("flat") Davis. On many older road and mountain bikes, particularly when "friction shifting" prevailed, the "default" gear shifter position tends to put the chain in this "small cog/small chain ring" position. Many of these people would have been better off riding single speeds – alas, a trend that was still decades away. However, if you are "stuck" in one gear on a many-geared bike, be aware that an expensive repair may be in your future.

Indexed shifting, as found on most new bikes today, has made shifting easy enough so that many novice cyclists are more likely to experiment with changing gears and, it is hoped, come to appreciate the benefits of "ridin' the range."

Using the full complement of gears is essential to maintaining a consistent cadence when starting, stopping, climbing, descending or fighting headwinds. With practice, shifting becomes second nature – almost automatic. Even the most reluctant gear-shifter will gear down on a long, steep ascent. Being in the correct gear at any given moment allows one to react faster in many traffic situations that require a quick spurt of speed.

So, if you got 'em (gears), flaunt 'em! You probably paid good money for them —don't let them go to waste. This is not to criticize the single-speed or fixie enthusiasts out there. I'm one myself – but that's another riding style – *vive la différence!*

David Takemoto-Weerts is the University of California, Davis, bike coordinator and a League of American Bicyclists' League Cycling Instructor

We want to hear from *you*!

Preferably e-mail your letter to: **saba@sacbike.org**
or mail it to: **SABA**
909 12th Street, Suite 114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

New Bike Lane On Coloma Road

Skip Amerine, shown above, tries out the new bike lanes on Coloma Road where they begin at the Sunrise Corridor Bikeway in the unincorporated area of Rancho Cordova. The bike lanes stretch about a quarter mile east to Gold Meadow Way and complete a crucial link to the Sacramento Regional Transit light rail station at Sunrise Boulevard. This stretch of Coloma was also resurfaced by Sacramento County to eliminate several barriers that made bicycling dangerous, including uneven pavement, potholes and six manhole covers in the eastbound lanes that were not flush with the roadway. Photo by Lea Brooks.

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New Bike Lanes midtown and Coloma Road. See pages 1 and 7

Why are SABA's board members smiling? Because Peggy Rex, center back row, had just announced that SABA will receive $17,000 from this year's Support the Parkway bike ride in July spearheaded by Peggy and her husband, Steve. Thank you Peggy and Steve and the American River Parkway Foundation. Board members are, from left to right, top row, John Whelan, Owen Howlett, Peggy Rex, Lea Brooks, Kevin Regan, bottom row, Joe Hartzog, Ivan Rarick, Scott Clark, Jennifer Finton, Skip Amerine. Photo by Walt Seifert