



The Squeaky Wheel

Issue No. 60

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

March 2008

From the President South County: You Can't Get There Safely by Bike

By Lea Brooks

The intent of the Feb. 21 public workshop in the Rosemont area for the update of the 2010 Sacramento City/County Bikeway Master Plan (see related story on page 4) was to accept public comments on how to improve bicycling in the unincorporated area of south Sacramento County.

As the other bicycle enthusiasts at the workshop were preparing to mark up the detailed maps provided at each table with suggestions for improvements, it hit me that much of south Sacramento County is not safe for bicycling.

Since moving here in 1987, I have pedaled thousands of miles on the American River Parkway bike trail and in the scenic foothills in El Dorado and Placer counties. During the first 10 or so years of living in Sacramento County, I often rode to Rancho Murieta via Prairie City and Scott roads and to El Dorado Hills via White Rock Road.

Because of the explosion of sprawl development and resulting increase in traffic and aggressive driving by motorists, now I rarely venture on those roads unless it's really early on a weekend or holiday morning.

Poor planning and developer influence have resulted in residential sprawl in outlying areas with no improvements to roadways. Although traffic has dramatically increased because of residents driving to their far-flung homes, many roads remain narrow and gen-

President, page 3

SABA on Versus TV! Amgen Tour of California

Despite cloudy skies, the threat of rain and actual precipitation, SABA provided valet parking for 325 bikes at the Amgen Tour of California bicycle race stage finish in Sacramento on Feb. 19. In fact, if the weather had been better, we probably would not have been able to accommodate the demand as the bike parking compound



Versus network commentators Phil Liggett, left, and Paul Sherwen marvel at SABA's bike parking set-up near Tour of California Stage 2 finish. Photo technical assistance by Don Levy

was full of bikes, many of them very high-end.

While racing is not part of SABA's mission, the race generated great publicity for bicycling and racing fans were ecstatic to have world-class riders sprinting on Sacramento's streets. For the record, Tom Boonen of Belgium, the former world road racing champion, won the stage in Sacramento with a spectacular sprint down L Street and Levi Leipheimer of Santa Rosa repeated as the overall winner of the tour.

SABA's parking compound was also the

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Freeport and 21st Revert to Two-Way

By Walt Seifert

The city of Sacramento made another significant advance in cycling convenience and neighborhood safety and livability in February. After more than three decades as one-way streets, the city changed Freeport Boulevard and 21st Street between Broadway and 4th Avenue back to two-way traffic. Freeport is now a bike route and 21st has bike

lanes — bike lanes that wouldn't be there without SABA's involvement.

Freeport isn't wide enough to have both bike lanes and on-street parking, but traffic speeds will be slower. The city added "sharrow" pavement markings (a bicycle symbol under a chevron) to remind motorists to share the lanes with bicyclists. For the most part, the lanes are wide enough to share. Near the intersection with 2nd Avenue, where left-turn pockets take up more room, parking is not allowed and bike lanes appear — though they are in the gutter pan.

The two-way reversion south of Broadway, coupled with the addition of bike lanes on 19th and 21st streets north of Broadway, create an unprecedented opportunity for Curtis Park and Land Park residents to get around by bike — and for students to bike to Sacramento City College and McClatchy High School. We can certainly expect to see more cyclists on these streets.

Of course there is always room for improvement. I've received a report from a new commuter cyclist that the bike lanes disappear in spots on 21st Street. That's the opposite of what happens on Freeport, where bike lanes appear near the intersection. The miss-

Freeport, 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 Charles McCann at (916) 501-3855 or you may e-mail FABA at faba_info@sacbike.org.

The Squeaky Wheel

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Newsletter design & layout: Steve Mathias/Jerry Plummer

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Contacting SABA

Phone: (916) 444-6600
E-mail: saba@sacbike.org
Web site: <http://www.sacbike.org>
Listserv: To sign up, send blank message to
saba-subscribe@topica.com

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SABActions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Neighbors Advocating Sustainable Transportation
- Sacramento Regional Transit workshop on DNA line Draft Environmental Impact Report
- Bicycle "summit" with Caltrans Director Will Kempton
- Sacramento County Bikeway Master Plan workshops
- Kroy Way pathway workshop
- Complete Streets
- SACOG on Metropolitan Transportation Plan comments
- May is Bike Month Steering Committee

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Rancho Cordova Planning Department and Caltrans District 3, International Drive extension
- Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on Fair Oaks Blvd widening
- Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on Markis/Lien project
- Sacramento Regional Transit on Rancho Cordova Parkway interchange
- Sacramento Regional Transit on DNA line Draft Environmental Impact Report

Testimony

- Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on Fair Oaks Blvd widening
- Sacramento Regional Transit Board on the DNA line Draft EIR

Other Actions

- Made presentation to California Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Met with city of Rancho Cordova representatives on design of Rancho Cordova Parkway interchange
- Interviewed by *The Sacramento Bee* about Sacramento bicycling, Amgen Tour of California bicycle parking and Los Rios College bicycle access
- Interviewed by Wall Street Journal
- Conducted Sacramento Northern Bikeway cleanup
- Held Foolish Freeway Frolic fundraiser
- Provided valet bike parking at Amgen Tour of California stage 2 finish

SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, April 10 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA Western Hemisphere HQ, 909 12th St.

For a global perspective to biking, join us at the party.



President, from page 1
 erally in poor condition.

For example, Scott Road to Rancho Murieta was once a delightful, scenic pedal through rolling rangeland. Today, pedaling is risky on Scott Road because of the speeding, impatient drivers seeking a shortcut to Rancho Murieta and beyond. White Rock Road has become an alternate to Highway 50 for residents of El Dorado Hills. They don't slow down for anyone.

I have never ridden to Elk Grove, Galt, Sheldon or Wilton, to the Cosumnes River and Deer Creek reserves or other destinations. I share the frustration of hundreds of residents of Elk Grove and other communities in the south county who have contacted SABA seeking safe and convenient bike routes to their jobs in Sacramento, Rancho Cordova and Folsom.

You can generally safely ride within a given community, but not from community to community because of sprawl-inducing policies that allow developers to only make improvements to roadways where development occurs. These policies make it economically feasible for developers to build houses on cheaper land far from urban areas. The result is a patchwork of roadways with bike lanes and shoulders fronting subdivisions and narrow roads where there are still open fields.

On the plus side, Sacramento County has acknowledged the consequences of these antiquated policies. Many areas of the county are only accessible by automobile, which exacerbates already bad traffic congestion and air pollution, and encourages unhealthy lifestyles because residents cannot safely bicycle and walk.

When the county initiates a transportation project today, it addresses the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. The very fact that the county is updating its portion of the Bikeway Master Plan is a mammoth step toward adopting policies and identifying specific projects to improve conditions for bicycling.

What can you do? If you are familiar with the unincorporated county area, please offer specific suggestions on how roadways can be improved for bicycling. Do so by visiting the Sacramento County Bicycle Master Plan Web site at <http://saccountybikeplan.webexone.com>. Is there a short stretch of road that can be improved to make your route safer? Is there a narrow bridge that needs widening? Let the county know.

Don't limit your suggestions to infrastructure. The county wants your ideas on how to encourage people to get on their bikes and how to change motorists' aggressive behavior through enforcement and public education.

The update of the master plan is your opportunity to make a difference for bicycling in Sacramento County. Go for it!⊗

Thank you, Wheelmen

The Sacramento Wheelmen made SABA the beneficiary of the silent auction at its annual banquet Jan. 26. The Wheelmen hosted SABA Executive Director Walt Seifert and his spouse as banquet guests and put in a plug for SABA's advocacy efforts. We extend our thanks to the Wheelmen for its continued support and generosity.⊗

Freeport, from page 1

ing bike lanes may be something that can be corrected as the two-way changes in lanes and striping are assessed after a trial period. The good news is that, within days, the better conditions for cycling have already inspired at least one nearby resident to become a bike commuter!

Freeport Boulevard, south of 4th Avenue continues to be daunting to many cyclists. The narrow lanes can't really be shared. There have been recommendations in both the Safe Routes to Transit study and the Los Rios Community College bicycle and pedestrian access report to make changes to Freeport between 4th Avenue and Sutterville Road, where bike lanes begin again. In an encouraging development, a Land Park resident is echoing those recommendations in a presentation to the Land Park Community Association. The proposal is that the gap in bike lane connectivity be corrected by converting Freeport to three lanes, one lane in each direction with a two-way, center left-turn lane. That would leave space for a parking lane and make room for bike lanes.⊗



Cyclist in new bike lane on southbound 21st Street at rail crossing. Photo by Walt Seifert



Short bike lane segment in the gutter on northbound Freeport Blvd. at 2nd Ave. Note green waste piles in the way. Photo by Walt Seifert

Bollard Discussion Under Way

By Walt Seifert

Bollards have been a pet peeve of mine for a long time, though the term peeve isn't nearly strong enough. Bollards are beyond irritating; they are dangerous. Bollards are the posts placed in bike paths that prevent vehicles from entering.

Five years ago, SABA published photos of bollards in *The Squeaky Wheel* that illustrated the lack of standards for bollard sizes, materials and placement. The photos showed many dings and scrapes on the bollards, clear evidence that cyclists were hitting them. A survey of SABA members confirmed that 1 percent had experienced a collision with a bollard within the previous year.

Bollards have been placed where there is no need. They have been placed where they are difficult to see. They are placed too close together or near turns, making it difficult for any bikes to



New bollard shows up on Sacramento River Trail near Sutterville Road. Is it necessary? Photo by Walt Seifert

pass and sometimes impossible for tandems or bikes with trailers to get through.

SABA wrote a letter to local bike coordinators shortly after our photo essay asking them to avoid using bollards. We cited a Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition study that recommended simply using a NO MOTOR VEHICLES sign instead.

But Chico Velo's Executive Director Ed McLaughlin's December 2007 crash with a bollard in Bidwell Park proved that more needs to be done. The crash left Ed with a spinal cord injury. He is still hospitalized and unable to use his arms and legs. Bollards continue to damage bikes and hurt cyclists and they are more than just a local problem.

Spurred to action by Ed's crash, I arranged with Caltrans to make a presentation about bollards to the California Bicycle Advisory Committee (CBAC) on Feb. 7. The low-tech presentation (on SABA's Web site at www.sacbike.org/advocacy/documents/bollards.doc) contains observations about the dangers of bollards and recommendations to create alternatives to bollards or safer bollards.

The presentation was well-received by CBAC. There appeared to be unanimous agreement that something needs to be done. Caltrans Division of Design representative Maggie O'Mara pointed out that Caltrans policies do not allow placement of fixed objects, such as a bollard, in the path of motor vehicles and wondered why policy should be different for bi-

County Bikeway Plan Update

The team working on the update of the 2010 *Sacramento City/County Bikeway Master Plan* for the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County held three workshops in February. The workshops were in North Highlands, Arden-Arcade and Rosemont. A fourth workshop originally scheduled for Orangevale on March 11 has been rescheduled. It will now be March 19 in Fair Oaks.

Workshop participants were asked to plot their routes, identify destinations and barriers, and make suggestions for improvements. At the Arden-Arcade workshop, the 25 attendees expressed a desire for more bike parking, elimination of bikeway gaps, better signage and more access points to the American River Parkway, more river crossings and better signal detection and timing.

The plan update team has also been gathering information through an online and paper copy survey.

Survey results so far show:

- The overwhelming majority of respondents bicycle for exercise or pleasure.
- The distribution of respondents average one-way bicycling distance is spread fairly evenly between 3-24 miles.
- Respondents are reporting that conflicts with motor vehicles and the lack of bicycle facilities are the main deterrents to bicycling.
- Off-street bike paths are rated as the most desirable bicycle facilities by the vast majority of respondents.

Visit the Sacramento County Bicycle Master Plan Web site at <http://saccountybikeplan.webexone.com> to learn about upcoming events and the progress of the plan. ☼

Sacramento Northern Cleanup

Once again, SABA's adopted area on the Sacramento Northern Bikeway is shipshape after volunteers weeded and mulched on Feb. 9. Thanks to: Steve Schweigerdt, coordinator, and his crew of John Ackerman, John Hickey, Nancy Louie, Jim Miller, Julie Mier (with city of Sacramento Parks Department), Tom Scheffelin, Bill Vanderslice and daughter Kate, and Bob Zarriello.

If you're passing by the trailhead, appreciate their work and maybe spend a minute pulling a weed or two. ☼

cycles. CBAC Chair Alan Wachtel noted that the Caltrans Highway Design Manual requires two feet of horizontal clearance between a bike path and vertical obstruction, yet bollards are obstructions placed in the middle of paths without any clearance requirements. Michelle Mowery, the city of Los Angeles bike coordinator, said Los Angeles had stopped using bollards some years ago without encountering any significant problems with motor vehicle conflicts on bike paths.

CBAC put the issue on its next agenda. Maggie O'Mara will present information that she and city of Sacramento bike coordinator Ed Cox assembled for the California Walk/Bike Conference held in Davis last fall. Caltrans will invite the staff that is responsible for bollard policy to attend the session. I'm very hopeful changes will be made that make all cyclists safer and help prevent future crashes like Ed's. Changes are clearly needed. Crashes with bollards are entirely preventable. ☼

SABA Fights Back

Last month, SABA President Lea Brooks wrote about attempts by the Gold River Community Association to bar cyclists from access to a proposed Rancho Cordova Parkway interchange with Highway 50 between Sunrise Boulevard and Hazel Avenue.

As Lea indicated, SABA has not let Gold River's ill-advised opposition go unchallenged. In developments since last month, the Sacramento City/County Bicycle Advisory Committee recommended the Board of Supervisors support bike/pedestrian access to the interchange. Caltrans Director Will Kempton, at the quarterly bicycle summit meeting he's been having with bike advocates, has said he supports the access.

The Gold River Community Association's position is inconsistent with federal, state and local policies. We hope the time is past that cyclists and pedestrians can be excluded from hugely expensive, once-in-a-lifetime transportation projects. We're making sure that the decision-makers hear that message. ☹



View of what Rancho Cordova Parkway interchange could look like. Image courtesy city of Rancho Cordova

Stimulate the Bicycle Economy

If you don't have plans yet for spending that income tax rebate, please consider contributing some or all of it to SABA to help stimulate the bicycle economy. ☹

Amgen, from page 1

backdrop for the opening dialogue of internationally famous bike racing commentators Phil Liggett, Paul Sherwin and Bob Roll on that evening's coverage of the Amgen Tour on Versus TV. Our compound was clearly visible behind the trio as they discussed the previous day's stage and gave their predictions for the finish in Sacramento.

Many thanks to the SABA volunteer valets, who did a great job. Some even worked overtime to cope with the end-of-race rush to retrieve bikes. Volunteers were: Julie Berry, Lea Brooks, Dave Brubaker, Candy and Jerry Furlong, Joe and Lynn Gray, Pat Larson, Ernie Long, Barry Morgan, Claude Poinski, Gerald Shupe, Sue Teranishi and Suzan Tobin. Ed Cox performed yeoman duties, assembling and repairing SABA's largest assembly ever of PVC bike racks. ☹

Busy Volunteers at SABA Amgen Bike Parking Compound



The lot is full. SABA's volunteers scramble to retrieve bikes for waiting customers. Photo by Skip Amerine



SABA volunteers, from left to right, Jerry Furlong, Mike Savino, Candy Furlong and Barry Morgan. Photo by Lea Brooks



SABA volunteers from left to right, Joe Gray, Lynn Gray, Dave Brubaker and Ernie Long. Photo by Lea Brooks

Member Profile Plus

Peter Jacobsen

By Paula Joy Welter



Peter Jacobsen doing his part to increase the number of cyclists. Photo by Michael Ronkin

There aren't many cyclists who can convincingly describe how to surf the ocean's waves on a bicycle. According to Sacramentan Peter Jacobsen, it's just a matter of navigating surface tension nimbly, utilizing the laws of hydroplaning to approach the oncoming surf at a 30-degree angle with Herculean speed. OK, when pressed, Jacobsen admitted that this feat is a myth — but what an intriguing introduction to a truly original thinker — and bike geek extraordinaire.

The proud owner of nine bicycles, Peter is also a cycling encyclopedia of countless studies and statistics that speak to the challenge of integrating walkers, cyclists and cars. His passion for the subject began in the mid-1990s while working on a bicycle plan for Pasadena. He was encouraged to examine this challenge in more depth, thanks to the mentoring of the late Anne Seeley of the then-California Department of Health Services, now Department of Public Health.

Anne's department was working to increase physical activity to combat the obesity epidemic. Anne shared with Peter, a civil engineer and public health consultant, that tension existed among public health professionals about whether they should encourage more cycling and walking. Would doing so set people up, in the end, to get injured? Peter's subsequent studies on the subject convinced Anne that cycling is not unsafe if street layout and design includes cyclists and pedestrians in the design process.

One of several technical papers Peter has authored, *Safety in Numbers: More Walkers and Bicyclists, Safer Walking and Bicycling*, turns upside down some prevalent viewpoints about traffic not mixing well with cyclists and pedestrians. First published in 2003 in the medical journal *Injury Prevention*, it is cited in numerous scientific journals worldwide. Peter was invited to Oslo, Norway to present his paper before the World Health Organization, doing so in May 2006.

Essentially, Peter's research disputes the assumption that more cyclist and pedestrian traffic on roads results in a higher

incidence of injury by motorists. Compellingly, he writes: "Across Europe and North America, the amount of walking and bicycling varies tremendously — from 6 percent of all trips (United States) to 46 percent (the Netherlands). Yet, the per capita fatal injury rate to people walking and bicycling is more or less the same in the two countries: 1.9/100,000 in the Netherlands and 2.1/100,000 in the United States. This surprising result shows that the numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists fatally injured does not vary linearly with the numbers of walkers and bicyclists."

Peter goes on to point out, essentially, that the converse is true: Per-cyclist collisions with cars decrease by one-third, for instance, when the number of cyclists on the road doubles. Why? Because motorists behave better when they *expect* to encounter people walking or cycling. Peter believes that if most streets included well-engineered bike lanes, cyclists and walkers would be perceived by motorists as a normal part of traffic instead of as unexpected interruptions.

Peter broke new ground in other safety-related studies. His paper, *Child Pedestrian Injuries on Residential Streets: Implications for Traffic Engineering*, argues that children are not developmentally at a stage that enables them to cope with traffic, especially when prone to distraction while engrossed in play. Therefore, engineers need to adapt the streets for children's safe navigation instead of expecting children to adapt to the streets.

Peter observed that a lot of traffic engineering is based on gut instinct instead of scientifically-based research. The result, Peter stated, is unethical design when laying out roads. Take Fair Oaks Boulevard between Fulton and Howe avenues, for example. There is no safe way to cross this multi-lane street's long stretch between these two intersections. This is an irresponsible design considering that the blocks between are dense with apartments, retail shops and restaurants on both sides of the street. The center traffic islands in place are so narrow that they provide little, if any, safe stopping points midway, even if a pedestrian or cyclist risks making it halfway across the street.

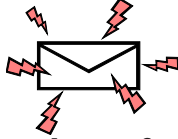
To heighten the effectiveness of traffic engineering, many more studies are needed, Peter pointed out. For example, traditionally, crash victims are studied since data about crash circumstances are accessed conveniently, through hospital records and police reports. How about studying, instead, what would change motorists' behavior to induce them to behave better around cyclists and pedestrians? How about a study to determine whether widening streets ends up encouraging or discouraging use by cyclists and pedestrians?

Approximately one-third of all increases in health care costs are due to the population's decrease in activity. Cyclists outlive non-cyclists. Peter can cite numerous studies that emphasize the rewards of regular cycling and walking, the most recent ones done in Copenhagen and China. With such impressive facts in mind, Peter is all the more committed to advocacy as a way to improve access for cyclists and pedestrians. However, he believes that the focus of advocacy should be redefined.

Currently, campaigns that warn cyclists to "watch out" inherently portray cycling and walking as dangerous, which ultimately can discourage both activities. Peter believes advocates should instead concentrate on figuring out how to get more

Jacobsen, page 7

Letters to the Editor



We want to hear from you!

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

or mail it to: **SABA**

**909 12th Street, Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

Dear Editor,

I am a member of SABA and was shocked to read in the February newsletter that SABA helped with the gift of the DuPont Telar XP Herbicide to the city of Sacramento.

I understand “goatheads” are annoying (I have had several flats because of them), but this does not justify at all the use of herbicides which are harmful to the environment. I thought SABA was keen to promote a healthier environment in Sacramento.

This is very disappointing to see such an initiative coming from SABA.

Raphael Hitzke

Jerry Miller of the volunteer SABA goathead team replies:

I share Raphael’s concern about what is introduced into the environment. The use of herbicides along the bike trails is a small part of our overall integrated vegetation management strategy to keep the non-native goatheads and bike tires separated.

There is cultural control which includes the asphalt of the trail and the limiting of transporters of goathead seeds such as vehicles. Bio-control is the largest part of goathead control. Stem and seed weevils are active in the Sacramento area and have some success. City crews and volunteers also use mechanical means (such as shovels, hoes, weed whackers, etc.) to reduce the vegetation along the bike trail. The herbicide is used only along the trail shoulder so goatheads are not allowed to grow next to or over the trail. It is applied once a year in very small amounts (ounces to the acre). The herbicide is very specific to certain broadleaf weeds of which the goatheads are one type. It does not kill the grasses along the trail so we have a nice landscape and not scorched earth.

Jerry’s day job is senior environmental planner for the California Department of Food and Agriculture and he is former primary state biologist for noxious weeds.

Jacobsen, from page 6

cyclists and pedestrians on the roads, there being safety in numbers.

By asking probing questions, conducting painstaking research and sharing his thoughtful conclusions, Peter continues to add positive momentum to cycling advocacy locally and far beyond Sacramento! In that sense, he bikes on water! ☸

Paula Joy Welter happily meanders Sacramento’s streets on a purple Bike Friday

Wash It So You Will Ride It

By Scott Yates

Spring is a time for annual cleanings. Your warm-weather to-do list might include uprooting an old garden or vacuuming the fireplace. But don’t forget the one-hour task that can improve your health and lower your gas bill – cleaning your bicycle.

A clean bike is a happy bike and happy bikes are ridden more frequently. There is a difference between a bike in need of a good washing and minor maintenance, and a bike in need of a professional mechanic. For this article, we will assume the last time you rode your bicycle, it was in working order. If your bicycle does not pedal, steer or brake properly, take it to your local bike shop (LBS) and get a quote for service. But don’t think that gets you out of the cleaning.

When I worked in a bike shop, our pet peeve was bike owners who dropped off a filthy machine for service and expected to pick it up clean. A bike shop is not a bike wash. So when the weather gets warm, you’ll need to get a little wet.

What you’ll need: a bucket, liquid dish soap, degreaser (Simple Green works well), small rag, large towel, old tooth brush or stiff bristle brush and a lubricant from your LBS. First, remove any accessories such as water bottles, computers and bags to be cleaned separately. Then:

- Fill the bucket with soap and water. Soak the rag in the bucket, spray the bike with water and get to washing.
- Lightly wipe the frame, saddle, handlebars and wheels. Be gentle, you want to remove the layer of dust, not the top layer of paint.
- Then, dump the soapy water, add the degreaser to the bucket and dilute with water as directed. Use the brush to clean the parts that impact performance: brakes, chain and cogs. Scrub away any grime from the chain, cogs and brakes.
- Hose the bike down, wipe it dry with the towel and replace the accessories.
- Oil the chain per the directions on the bottle.

Now that your bike is clean, you may be tempted to jump on and go for a ride. But first, perform a basic safety check. Do the tires have proper pressure? Are the wheel nuts tight? Do the brake levers work smoothly? Do the brake pads grab evenly? Are the handlebars, seat and pedals tight? If you answer yes to all of the above after cleaning your bicycle, put on your helmet and go for a ride. ☸

May is Bike Month

May is coming up. This year there is a new Web site, Mayisbikemonth.com, for recording mileage and participating in the Million Mile Challenge. The site becomes active on April 1. Remember to make SABA your team — and that you can participate both as a member of an employer team and the SABA team.

Hold the dates of May 1 and May 15 on your calendar. Why? Thursday, May 1 will be our annual Kick-off/Show-off ride starting after a press conference at the State Capitol. Thursday, May 15 is the date for the Bike Fest at the west steps of the State Capitol. ☸

SABA

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Part of 21st Street reverts to two-way traffic
and adds bike lanes.
See page 1

Fair Oaks Boulevard Victory

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors decided to keep Fair Oaks Boulevard four lanes in a “main street” section from Marconi Boulevard to Carmichael Park.

This is a victory for neighborhood livability, cyclists and pedestrians. The Carmichael-Old Foothill Farms Community Council hadn’t been able to agree on whether the boulevard should stay four lanes or be widened to six lanes. The lane configuration was the most controversial piece of a Carmichael community revitalization plan that has been in the making for seven years.

Some residents and council members wanted a six-lane street to limit congestion that might prompt cut-through traffic from using side streets. Others wanted the lower speeds, greater ease of crossing, safety and relative calm of a four-lane street.

Supervisor Jimmie Yee said, “I can’t see a main street with six lanes.”

County staff got the go ahead to work on an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) with four-lanes as the preferred option. Ultimately, supervisors will have to approve the EIR and the area’s revitalization plan. That approval is slated for early 2009. ☸

Foolish Freeway Frolic Success

The Foolish Freeway Frolic on Feb. 22 at Revolution Wines was fun and a fabulous success. The winery was thronged with more than 150 guests. The din from the animated chatter pretty much drowned out Master of Ceremonies Eric Davis’ attempts to make announcements. The convivial crowd seemed to enjoy the location, the wine, the food, the music and the company.

Thanks to all who attended and/or contributed to the Frolic, a fundraiser for the Neighbors Advocating Sustainable Transportation (NAST)/Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) lawsuit filed to get Caltrans to identify and mitigate all of the environmental consequences of its plan to expand Highway 50. SABA is a member of NAST and ECOS. The lawsuit hearing is scheduled for March 21. ☸

Segways on Bike Trail

By Lea Brooks

I was pedaling east on the American River Parkway bike trail along the south side of Lake Natoma in Folsom on the President’s Day holiday Feb. 18 when a group of five or six people on Segways passed me going the opposite direction.

To say the least, I was shocked because I didn’t think Segways were allowed on bike trails. These controversial “personal transportation devices” seemed very out of place among the bicyclists and pedestrians enjoying the spring-like conditions under their own power.

I reported the incident via e-mail to the California State Parks’ Gold Fields District that has jurisdiction over this stretch of the bike trail and received this response from Superintendent Michael Gross: “Due to a recent change in the California Vehicle Code, Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Devices (Segways) are now allowed on sidewalks, streets and bike trails. We have not seen the need to restrict the Segways from our portion of the American River Parkway at this time due to the fact that we haven’t noticed a lot of activity because of their high price. We believe the five or six Segways you noticed were an illegal concession operation. I have noticed a couple of listings on the Internet advertising guided tours around Folsom Lake. I will be contacting these companies to have them stop their operations on the Folsom Lake section of the American River Parkway.”

The legislation that changed the California Vehicle Code was Assembly Bill 470 signed into law last year.

If you see Segways on the bike trail, I encourage you to report the incident to State Parks at 988-0205 or Sacramento County ranger dispatch at 875-6672 so they can keep track of Segway activity. Although it’s currently not illegal to use Segways on the bike trail because of this legislation, jurisdictions can restrict their use.

Remember, the stretch of the American River Parkway from Discovery Park to Hazel Avenue is under the jurisdiction of Sacramento County and the stretch from Hazel Avenue to Beals Point is State Parks. ☸