Fuzzy Polka Ride Memories

Roll out the bicycle, we’ll have a big mass of fun.
Roll out the bicycle, we’ve got the cars on the run.
Roll out the bicycle, we’ll have a whole lot of fun.
Everyone should roll the bicycle, because Critical Mass is here, polka!

—Dan Korn
The most eagerly anticipated Chicago Critical Mass ride of the year is upon us: the annual Polka Ride! The tradition began in January 2000, when 45 cyclists pedaled to Baby Doll Polka Club near Midway Airport to listen to Eddie Korosa. In 2001, the ride ended at Baby Doll but this time The Polkaholics played. Since then, every Polka Ride concludes with a fabulous performance from The Polkaholics. Baby Doll changed hands in July 2004 (it is now called the Karolinka Club), but a new home was found for Massers to get a Polkaholics fix. With the exception of 2007, when the ride went to Emerald Isle in Edison Park, every Polka Ride since 2005 has ended at Lincoln Square Lanes. The Polka Ride has steadily grown over the years and now typically draws hundreds of riders. Tonight, routes will be presented and voted on by riders according to the simple rules of anarchy. A route will be proposed to Lincoln Square Lanes (4874 N. Lincoln Ave.) where The Polkaholics will begin playing at 8 p.m. Have a Happy Friday and be sure to Polka your patootie off tonight! (Information from Dandy Don and da' Square Wheelman.)

The Polka Ride, January 2011 (2011 PolkaRailleur). The PolkaRailer (thepolkarailer.blogspot.com) is an unofficial publication of Chicago Critical Mass (chicagocriticalmass.org) made possible with donations of paper and cash from riders like you. Chicago Critical Mass is a free, fun bike parade which begins around 5:30 p.m. at Daley Plaza on the last Friday of every month. This issue was created by willow naco (ThePolkarailer@gmail.com) and printed by Lee Diamond of Big Shoulders Reality (bighsholdersreality.com). Thank you: Alex Wilson, C Drew, da’ Square Wheelman, Dandy Don, Don Sorsa, Gin Kilgore, Jim Maciel, John Greenfield, Joseph Zmuda, Lee Fruits, Mr. Mike, Piero Jetti, and the other usual suspects (you know who you are). Credits: baklava by Kultigin (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baklava), balacala by Gaelen Marsden (commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Balaclava), beer mug: clicker.com, bowling ball: bowlingballs.us, camera: centralnewmexico brittlecarnival.com; cloud: mirbike.com; drum and guitar: tinnitus.com; lyrics © The Polkaholics and reprinted with permission of the lovely Dandy Don; microphone: freestockphotos.biz; photo of The Polkaholics by Vera Gavrilovic; polar bear: lpzoo.org/animals/factsheet/polar-bear; Polka bands: brave.com/bo, happyhumpappcomombo.net, polkacidoe.com, polkaholic.de; polka dots modified from create-a-mural.com; polka instructions modified from show.com and centralhome.com; Polkarailer header modified from John Greenfield’s previous Polka maps.
Polkaholics Theme

Ladies & Gentlemen, the show has begun
We are The Polkaholics
We're here to polka, it's second to none
We are The Polkaholics
It's wild, it's crazy, it's raw power fun
We are The Polkaholics
So if you think this is a joke-
We're here to search and destroy and POLKA!

Steve is on drums and James is on bass
We are The Polkaholics
My name is Don and I have just one aim
We are The Polkaholics
It's wild, it's crazy, it's raw power fun
So if you think we're here for a mocha
We're here to search and destroy and POLKA!

Steve has got something he has to admit
I am a Polkaholic
Then there is James who knows he can't quit
I am a Polkaholic
My name is Don and I am an addict
I am a Polkaholic
So won't you help us feed our disease
And come and join our polka if you please

Chicago Bike Shop Database

The goal of the Chicago Bike Shop Database is to maintain up-to-date information about all bike shops in Chicagoland (all areas covered by the Chicagoland Bicycle Map). The database was inspired by a summer 2004 bike shop tour during which Chicago cyclists John G. and Steve M. visited every bike shop in Chicago—by bike—in one weekend. The data they collected and the pictures they took appear on the site. Visit chicagobikeshops.info for a complete list of shops, a map of shops via Google Maps, to read (and add your own!) customer reviews and feedback about shops in the database, and to learn how to add a shop that is missing. Sample listings:

Barnard’s Schwinn
6109 W. North Ave., Oak Park (1600N/6109W)
708-524-2660

Barnardsschwinn.com Hours: Sun 11 a.m.-3 p.m. (Mar. thru Sept.); Mon, Thu 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Tues, Wed, Fri 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Overall Rating: 5/5 as of 01.14.11. Sells used bikes? Yes. Sells used parts? No. Offers Active Transportation Alliance discount? Yes. Offers rentals? No. Description: Specializes in classic Schwinn restoration. Established in 1911, an authorized Schwinn dealer. Brands sold: Schwinn, Fuji, GT/Dyno, Electra Bicycles, Diamond Back, Univega. Recent feedback: “Highly recommend them. Helpful, friendly, quick turnaround on repairs and tune-ups, Sunday hours, great with kids. Have purchased several kid’s bikes and a road bike over the years, along with lots of accessories.” —Paul “I’ve been going here for years...Jeff and Greg are very knowledgeable and never pressure to buy anything you don’t need. In fact, I was there recently and they recommended something much cheaper than what I was originally going to purchase because ‘it’s pretty much the same thing.’ Great! I also really appreciate that they don’t talk down to people like me that are not bike savvy with all technical jargon. Another thing, not only have they given me a mini lesson about changing a tire, but also helped me transition to clips where I didn’t let me leave until I felt comfortable. I recommend these guys 100% for their honesty and friendly service.” —Ellen

Uptown Bikes
4653 N. Broadway
Chicago (4653N/1100W)
773-728-5212

Uptownbikes.com Hours: Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri: 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat, Sun: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wed: closed. Overall Rating: 4.6/5 as of 01.14.11. Sells used bikes? Yes. Sells used parts? Yes. Offers Active Transportation Alliance discount? Yes. Offers rentals? No. Description: Formerly Urban Bikes. Brands sold: Raleigh, KHS/Free Agent. Basic commuter gear – lights, racks, fenders, bags. Large selection of Park Tools. Excellent reconditioned bicycles and parts. Used bikes available February – April. A community positive shop, Uptown has usually been generous with donations to bicycle advocacy groups for raffles, door prizes, etc. Basic bicycle maintenance classes offered during Bike Winter. Woman-owned and managed. Recent feedback: “This is the best shop in the city, no question about it. The people are great, they do excellent work, and charge decent prices. They never try to sell you more stuff. In fact, I have seen them forgo a sale because it was in the interest of the customer. I will always give them my business and I have made numerous referrals. Salud!!” —Pipon “I was so pleasantly surprised by how quick the service was even though the place was packed with customers getting bikes serviced. And they are so friendly and knowledgeable. The other surprise was it was so affordable. I’m glad I live in Uptown! Thanks, Uptown Bikes!!” —John
10 Misconceptions About Polka
by Dandy Don of The Polkaholics

1. Polka is 1,2,3. Punk rockers used to say “why go from side to side, when you can go up and down,” and The Polkaholics say “2 beats less is really more,” so actually, polka just goes to 2. It’s based on 2/4 timing and simply goes 1,2,1,2 etc. Waltzes go to 3, but not polkas. Thus, Polkacide, the mathematically astute band from San Francisco refer to waltzes as “polkas and a half!” Presumably this idea of polka going 1,2,3 is due to the term “oomph-pah,” but really if it’s oomph-pah it would be a waltz (or some other musical style with 3 beats). Using this terminology, polkas could be called oompah or better, oomPOW!

2. Polka=accordion. Many people assume that a traditional polka band must have an accordion in it. While it is true that some polka styles feature accordions, others definitely do not. For example, in the wild Chicago honky style developed by Li’l Wally, you would typically find drums, concertina, clarinet, and trumpet, but no accordion. I think that the idea that polka=accordion is largely due to the popularity of Frankie Yankovic, whose Cleveland-style of polka featured not one, but two accordions, as well as bass and banjo (yep, banjo!), and sometimes drums and/or saxophone. Also, the accordionist Myron Floren of the Lawrence Welk show probably did a lot to get this polka=accordion idea into a lot of people’s heads. Time to get this idea OUT of everyone’s head!
by Todd Gee

I’ve been riding bikes in Northern Winter for many years now and the absolute BEST thing I’ve found for keeping my feet warm and dry is NEOS overshoes (overshoe.com).

They’re the whip. They’re completely waterproof and warm via a large trapped air space. They go on and come off VERY easily. They’re worn over normal shoes, making them perfect for the commuter.

I use them in conjunction with big-ass platform pedals – the biggest, gnarliest ones I can get. (Winter-specific pedals aren’t crazy – it takes less than five minutes to swap out your pedals – and big pedals give you much more to mash down on with boots, or better yet NEOS.) When I get to work/wherever, I just pop them off at the door and let them sit there in their own little slush pile until I’m ready to leave for the day. My feet stay dry and toasty and I never have to deal with swapping footwear.

I’ve spent lots of Winter time on the lakefront in mine wearing only my normal shoes underneath and never been anything other than completely comfortable. They’re great for cycling as the big cushiony bottom doesn’t facilitate crushing of any insulation you may be wearing (like some thick socks). They’re great for walking as they have big-boot tread on the bottom.

I have (what would now be called) the Voyager model and have been completely satisfied. They’re high enough to get under the ends of shell/snow pants, making you completely waterproof, while not being too high to be awkward.

They’re available all over. They’re expensive ($60 at postaluniform.com), but they’re very well built and easily take the place of winter boots. I have the uninsulated ones and have used them comfortably in the muddy Spring to keep my footing and keep mud off me.

NEOS – getting my “Beardy Bike Winter Freak” stamp of approval.

Polka is a single style of music.

As can be inferred from the above, there are several different polka styles in North America. In Chicago, the dominant style is Polish, but even here there are two genres: honky (wild and loose) and push (staccato and powerful). Elsewhere, you can hear Slovenian style (sometimes called Cleveland style), Eastern style (a fast Polish style from the Eastern U.S.), Dutchmen (oompah), and Conjunto (Tex-Mex from the Rio Grande region). There is even a native-American style called Waila or “chicken scratch” (ever hear of chicken scratch fever?). All of these styles have different instrumentation and sounds, so really there is no one polka style but a panoramic or polkaramic rainbow of POLKA!

No polka clubs left in Chicago. Sadly, this is almost true, but not quite. There are two clubs in the city that still feature polka on a regular basis: Club 505 (or “the five”) in the Hegewisch neighborhood of Chicago and Rudy and Ann’s near Midway Airport. Both of these clubs are AMAZING old-time neighborhood haunts. Check them out! These clubs are definitely old-school, so you are not likely to see a schedule on the Internet or in the Reader. Nope, the best way to find out what is happening at either of these clubs is to listen to some
of the polka radio shows in Chicago (Saturday: WPNA 1490 AM from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.; Sunday: WPNA from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. and WCEV 1450 AM from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.). If you listen to these polka radio shows, besides hearing great music, you will also discover that there are a fair number of polka dances and events at several banquet halls in Chicago (Polonia Banquets on the southwest side and Stardust Banquets on the northwest side) and in the suburbs (Glendora House in Chicago Ridge). I prefer the clubs to the banquet halls, but really I’ll go ANYWHERE to get a polka fix!

No polka radio on the Internet. Besides the aforementioned Chicago polka radio shows, which also broadcast on the Internet, there are two Internet polka radio stations: 247polkaheaven.com and polkajammernetwork.org. Check out these websites and you’ll see a wide variety of polka shows. In particular, why not give Wild Wilson a listen on 247polkaheaven – he has been an avid supporter of The Polkaholics since the start!

No modern polka bands besides The Polkaholics. In fact, there are several great non-traditional polka bands that were in operation WAY before us including: Brave Combo (Denton TX), Polkacide (San Francisco), and The Happy Schnapps Combo (Manitowoc, WI). Even though we didn’t know it, The Polkaholics owe a big debt to these trailblazers!! More recently, from Berlin is the band Polkaholix, who are quite awesome. These are just a few of the wild and crazy polka bands out there. Check them out on Facebook or MySpace and you’ll see what I mean.

January Superheroes

by JamiMaria

A few weeks ago, I was idly browsing through Crazy Guy on a Bike journals and I came across the journal of Nicole Blouin who is undertaking a project where she plans to live on a bike for the next several years. This idea sounds fantastic and she obviously has some deep thoughts about this as her journal shows.

Nicole began her trip with a Superhero Bike tour. I had never heard of this group, but the idea was almost instantly appealing. The superheroes are a loose group of cyclists who meet and embark on tours with community service in mind.

As I loved this idea, but had just missed the Austin tour, I decided that it would be doable to organize a mini superhero ride here in Chicago. I set it for Martin Luther King Jr. Day as I had the day off of work and like the idea that it should be a day on...not a day off.

The weather wasn’t horrible, but quite a bit of trash in its rightful place. The weather was certainly a hindrance, but overall, it was a fantastic time. Just riding around the city with my cape aflutter prompted cheerful honks, many waves, spontaneous applause, and even a proclamation of love.

Doing things out of the ordinary is absolutely worth the risk of embarrassment. Hopefully you’ll see me out in my cape again soon. We will do another ride which will be organized through the Swerve Collective group: thechainlink.org/group/swervecollective.

Reprinted with JamiMaria’s permission from baloonbiker.blogspot.com/2011/01/january-superheroes.html.
Art Show: Call for Submissions

We are looking for art in all media – painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, video, interactive, and fashion. Our only stipulation is that it be bicycle-related. We will be relying on Chicago Urban Art Society Creative Director Peter Kepha to jury the show this year. Artwork submissions are due Saturday, February 19, 2011. For each piece, e-mail your name, media, dimensions, installation requirements, a well-lit high-res photo and title of your work to bikewinterartshow@gmail.com. If you need extra time, we can be flexible as long as you communicate your plans with sketches, dimensions, and photos of work in progress. Send details of the work you wish to submit as soon as possible to secure a spot in this year’s show.

–Steven Lane and Stuart Hall

Jimmy Sturr is the best current polka artist. Sure, Mister Jimmy has won 18 out of the 24 Grammy Awards given in the now defunct “Best Polka Album” category, but to say he is the best?!?! You have GOT to be kidding!! It’s kind of like saying that Vanilla Ice is the best rapper. Enough said. If you want lame homogenized mainstream polka, listen to Jimmy Sturr. As for me, I’ll play Li’l Wally, Eddie Zima, Ampol Aires, Happy Louie, or Stas’ Bulanda to get my polka kicks!

Polka will die soon. This could be true for the traditional polka styles. Certainly the audience for traditional polka here in Chicago is pretty old and dying out. But the players are generally younger, and there are lots of young people into polka at many of the summer polka fests all over the country (just Google “polka fests” and you’ll be amazed at what you find), so maybe the death of polka has been greatly exaggerated. Certainly, The Polkaholics will NEVER let polka die! Nor will you, RIGHT?

Polka is just silly music. I guess that I’ll end this with a misconception that almost everyone who has never really listened to polka has. I have to confess guilty to this one too, because before forming The Polkaholics and doing research on this wunderbar music, I too thought of polka as a silly kind of music. Well, luckily I had a mid-life crisis involving beer, blue-haired ladies, sausages, and old spice, so I’m here today to tell you that

How does Kiva work?

1) Lenders like you browse profiles of entrepreneurs in need and choose someone to lend to. When you lend, Kiva collects your funds and then passes them along to one of their microfinance partners.

2) Kiva’s microfinance partners distribute your loan funds to the selected entrepreneur. Often, Kiva’s partners also provide training and other assistance to maximize the entrepreneur’s chances of success.

3) Over time, the entrepreneur repays their loan. Repayment and other updates are posted on Kiva and e-mailed to you.

4) When you get your money back, you can re-lend to someone else in need, donate your funds to Kiva to cover operational expenses, or withdraw your funds.

Chicago Critical Mass Kiva Team: 14 members, 286 loans, $7,575.00 loaned.
Tell us a little something about you.
Utility/recreational rider. Haven’t had a
car for more than four years and don’t
miss it at all.

Do you remember when you learned
how to ride a bike? Was it scary or
exhilarating or a little of both?
I was a late bloomer, but haven’t
stopped. Took a bike out of the garage
one evening and went sailing down
the street. I can still feel like I am 10
years old while riding; that is one of my
favorite things about it.

What are your best memories
associated with Critical Mass?
Leading a ride in the summer. 2,000
happy people following you all
over town to the beach is fantastic.
South Siders cheering us on through
residential neighborhoods and seeing
CCM ride through the spray of an open
fire hydrant will always stick in my mind.
Meeting so many friends, and learning
more about the city I love by riding.

If you could change one thing about
Critical Mass, what would it be?
I don’t think I would change anything.
I gripe sometimes, but a lack of

Could put me behind bars for up to 15
years. This could be the last free New
Year’s Eve of my life. I am betting your
involvement and love of your rights
against the cruelty of the Cook County
State’s Attorney’s Office. I am putting
my faith in God and my hope in you.
Your voices are powerful. Talk about

Support C Drew by attending his trial
(possibly the first week of April 2011).
Follow c-drew.com/blog for updates.
Public officials who prosecute people like me with this law depend on you, the media, to be distracted or compliant. This law reduces the public’s ability to gather information in public on how public officials act in public and limits their ability to provide that evidence to you for your stories. Your profession is limited by this law. Your right and ability to gather information in public is directly affected, as well. Not to do so is a conflict of interest.

The Picasso Plaza was deserted as I piled up the last of my freshly printed art patches. I packed every thing into my leather bag and walked to the “L” train. This rare December 31st weather emphasized the uniqueness of every day, every moment. I am on a road that variety would kill the enjoyment. Unpredictability and evolving style are two of its most appealing characteristics.

On that note, what one thing would you change about Chicago or the world? Only one?

Besides Chicago Critical Mass, where else can we have the pleasure of riding with you?

Pleasure is debatable, but I try to participate in neighborhood masses, snow rides, tweed rides, FBC, Lee Diamond’s outstanding neighborhood architectural tours, and Bike The Drive/ L.A.T.E. Ride/Boulevard Lakefront Tour. Or just around town. I occasionally plan and post a ride to The Chainlink.

What kind of rider are you? (Spandex-clad, Winter Wimp, Unclassified, Top Secret, etc.)

Relaxed (slow), as-is (no special clothes aside from cold-weather gear), and irritatingly visible at night.

I am often asked, “You have a friend named Pierogi John?” Could you explain how you got this nickname?

John Greenfield’s drawing of a bike-riding pierogi on a January CCM map made me smile. Both the ride and the Polkaholics show were incredibly fun. A ridiculous idea to make a costume to celebrate the occasion came to mind, which I will never live down.
Riders, pedestrians, drivers, and the band loved it; I have repeated it every year since then. To people in various neighborhoods through which we ride, it represents different foods – empanada, pot sticker, ravioli, samosa, etc. Dumplings are universal.

**What’s the strangest thing you’ve carried by bike? What’s the strangest thing you’ve seen someone else carry by bike?**

I used to take a cello back and forth to grade school. Not easy, but it can be done. I once saw what can only be described as a bike train with a family of five – a tandem with two tag-alongs and a trailer. Very impressive.

**Do you have a general biking tip?**

If you want to be treated like traffic, act like traffic. When drivers know what you are doing or going to do, you are both better off. At least once a week, a cabdriver will stop and wave me through a left turn – even when they have the right of way. Just because I signaled first or stopped. And definitely join thechainlink.org.

**How about a winter biking tip?**

A balaclava will let you ride in much colder weather than you think you can.

You might be able to eat baklava while wearing a balaclava and riding a bicycle. Even though it is true that food is fuel, baklava won’t keep you as warm as a balaclava will.

**What else do you enjoy?**

Learning about the city, about life from friends and strangers, and being an old coot.

As I said, the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office has no shame. They are cynical and calculating. They do not believe the people of Illinois are watching them. Innocence or justice do not figure into their power calculations. Can they get away with this without political damage is the only question they ask. That part is up to you. Do you care about your rights? If so, you must fight.

I will admit, I did not know about the extent to which the Illinois eavesdropping law takes our rights away before I was charged with this 1st class felony. I read for years about how artists in New York City used their First Amendment right to record video and audio of what police who harassed them said to them in public. The artists in New York regularly go to court with audio recordings of police ticketing them for selling art in public in violation of the city codes. When the police are shown by the video and audio to be wrong about the statutes or abusive the artists will win the case. If it shows the police are correct the artist loses. That is only fair.

New York City artist/organizer Robert Lederman stresses the importance of video and audio in successfully defending one’s right to sell art in public. Until after my arrest I could not imagine not having this right in America but to my surprise, Illinois does not support that American First Amendment right. We have lost our tool to defend ourselves with audio evidence in Illinois since 1994 when an ex-policeman injected unconstitutional language into our State’s eavesdropping law. Now – unlike 48 other States where audio recording is perfectly legal – we do not have that freedom to defend ourselves. That’s why this is about you as much as it is about me.

Most people in Illinois do not realize any more than I did that this right has been taken away and will only find out when they open up their cell phone to record a public official in public who is stepping out of bounds. Then they will find out, like me, that it is a 1st class felony, one
New Year’s Eve printing my cuffed art patch at Chicago Critical Mass.

whose work was recently submitted by the artist and printed to be given away to the public.

Now to the evidence which suggests the State’s Attorney’s strategy. Mr. Allen begins in his opening statement of the motion describing the arresting officer as doing a terrorism/counter-terrorism walk looking for terrorist activity when he encounters me (page 10-11). Mr. Allen then fast forwards to the police station where in my red poncho, in a cellophane sandwich bag the inventorying officer finds a digital audio recorder and notes that a red light indicates it is on and recording. Mr. Allen continues to suggest my devious intent is to spy on the Chicago Police Department by

In summary, the State’s Attorney’s plan to prosecute me appears as follows. The arresting officer is on a terrorist watch walk. He encounters a possible suspect breaking the law. The suspect is seeking to be arrested with the intent of spying on the officer who is the head of the Homeland Security detail and of spying on the Chicago Police Department by secreting a bug in his leather bag to smuggle the bug into the tactical office of the Chicago Police Department to undermine their efforts to protect the public from terrorists. This crime deserves the 1st class felony charge, one step below attempted murder, to deter terrorists from attacking the security apparatus of the United States of America in this manner. Mr. Allen is saving your lives by prosecuting this dangerous artist!

Do you have a favorite quote or piece of advice to share?
Nah. Well, enjoy those around you and what you do.

Do you even have a cat?
Yes. Name withheld due to embarrassment.

Anything else?
If I don’t know you, I’d probably like to.

Thanks, John, for your time!
Pierogi John, for those of you who don’t know him, is a regular contributor to winter cycling fleece goody production. He has donated countless yards of fleece for balaclavas, gaiters, and scarves in years past and is responsible for purchasing fleece for goodies in blinding bright orange, green, and yellow this year. THANK YOU! –wn

I Can’t Get Enough of Pierogi John

For the 2010 ICGEoPJ Ride to the Pierogi Fest in Indiana, participants were encouraged to decorate their bike or helmet with an ICGEoPJ catnip toy. Sugar Ray, the kitty pictured above, provided quality assurance during production of the toys and swatted off on each of them.

*ICGEoPJ: A group formed to share our love for all things Pierogi John...and to make him blush.

A day in the life of Pierogi John
as told by willow naeco

Pierogi John encounters a crime in progress.

Pierogi John comes to the rescue!

Pierogi John confiscates the gun!!
It all started with an innocent comment from Julie on December 8, 2009: “Pierogi John likes salad with meat on it.” And then came the damning images and accusations...

Garth said, “His carnivorousness doesn’t bother me as much as his uncanny (and perhaps evil) ability to be in the right place at the right time throughout the years. To wit...”

Lee, forever the skeptic, replied, “This could easily be a coincidence. I would urge you not to jump to any conclusions off of this one, innocent, easily explainable photo. Now, on the other hand, if you have any other incriminating images, I think this is the best place to air those out in search of plausible and logical explanations for the same.”

Minutes later, Garth said, “A fine suggestion, Lee, though the duty is a heavy burden since Pierogi John is a good friend. Hell, I even gave him the nickname. But now, I can no longer keep his nefarious secret...”

Lee came to Pierogi John’s defense once again by saying, “While your evidence is

PIEROGI JUDAS!” Lee gasped.

Garth was just getting started and replied, “Of course, there have been numerous attempts to stop him. Alas, all have failed!”

“He has always, always escaped and now calls the Windy City his home. Be afraid...very, very afraid!”

Lee, though the duty is a heavy burden since Pierogi John is a good friend. Hell, I even gave him the nickname. But now, I can no longer keep his nefarious secret...”

People stopped by and looked through the Art Patch Project art. New people picked up art patches they liked. Critical Massers who know me and my work found new art patches from artists. More about your rights and less about me. This is an attack on everyone with a cell phone who could use it to record a questionable police action in public.

Mr. Jeff Allen plans to attack your rights by claiming I am a terrorist type seeking to bug the Homeland Security apparatus of the Chicago Police Department. It may sound like a stretch to pick-up a harmless artist for selling art for $1 on the street and then claim he is a terrorist and worthy of a 1st class felony, one step below attempted murder. However, in Chicago where the Cook County State’s Attorney has no shame and few ethical limitations, it is possible.

The oral arguments from our October 22 motion to suppress the evidence from my audio-recorder which we just published on our website (art-tees.org/free-speech.htm). In this 148-page document, Mr. Jeff Allen, the Assistant State’s Attorney on behalf of the State’s Attorney of Cook County, laid out his plan to convict me of 1st class felony eavesdropping.

This is a multiple assault on the First Amendment. To begin with, it is a transparent attempt to silence a cultural critic for his support for the rights of artists to express themselves in public by selling art on the sidewalks and in the parks of their city. Of equal importance the State is using this high profile case to establish a law that takes away the right of citizens to gather audio evidence of what police say to us in public. This retards our ability to perform our democratic duty of overseeing our public servant’s (police) actions in public. This same law prevents us from gathering the evidence we need to bring to court to protect ourselves and others from abuse by police officers by audio-recording what they say to us in public while they arrest or interrogate us. These rights fall under the First and Fourth Amendments. Thus, this case is more about your rights and less about me. This is an attack on everyone with a cell phone who could use it to record a questionable police action in public.
Fifty Degrees on New Year’s Eve

by C Drew

I was late getting together for the Critical Mass here in Chicago on 12/31/10 so I left my bike at the “L” Train at Howard at the end of the Red Line and brought only my screen printing supplies fitted into my brown leather carryall bag.

Because New Year’s Eve parties were flourishing everywhere around Chicago the crowd for the December Critical Mass was small, even though it had stopped raining, the sky had cleared, and the temperature was abnormally above fifty degrees. This might not happen again on New Year’s Eve in Chicago for another 100 years or longer. I couldn’t help remembering a week earlier handing out art patches in the snow and cold on December 21 when Nancy Bechtol shot her video of our Winter solstice Art Patch Project art giveaway.

I sat down next to the city government building of the Picasso Plaza and laid out Art Patch Project art patches on my scarf. I taped a “Free Art Patches” sign to the plaza stone. I began to print the art patch from my arrest that I had created from a frame-grab from Nancy Bechtol’s video of my arrest. It is the image of my hands in cuffs shot just before they whisked me away. Bicyclists milled around watching me print.

It was not long before someone stopped by to ask how my case was going. I kept printing as I prepared to answer his question. It has been thirteen months that I’ve been fighting this 1st class felony for audio-recording my own arrest for selling art for $1 on State Street while attempting to challenge the constitutionality of Chicago’s peddlers license law. In Chicago many elected officials have no shame and no respect for the First Amendment.

The answer to the man’s question about how my case is going can be found in the art patch from my arrest that I had created from a frame-grab from Nancy Bechtol’s video of my arrest. It is the image of my hands in cuffs shot just before they whisked me away. Bicyclists milled around watching me print.

But Lee said simply, “The Philadelphia Inquirer is not to be trusted. They had the Bears going to the Super Bowl this year for example.”

And so Garth replied, “OK, then, what’s more reputable than the White House? Definite proof of PJ’s Unholy Alliances...”

Then, with one final image and these parting words, “And now, he’s returned to the scene of his crime!” Garth has forced Pierogi John to forever defend his reputation.

When contacted for follow-up comment a year later, Garth had this to say: “All kidding aside, John is one of the foundations of Chicago’s wonderfully cranky bike community. Like any foundation he’s not as visible as those more assertive characters whose DIY dominance of the alternative transportation scene is so often confused with leadership around here. What John is known for is being nothing but a gentleman to anyone he ever meets. Everyone who has ever ridden with him knows they can count on John to back them up in an unfortunate encounter with cagers. And each one of us who calls John a friend can count on the fact that the feeling is always returned in word and deed fivefold.” I’m glad to hear you’ve come to your senses, Garth! –wn
Free Speech Artists’ Movement

ART PATCH PROJECT INFO
Donate a corner of your art to support freedom! E-mail umcac@art-teez.org to submit patch designs to the Free Speech Artists’ Movement.

WHY
Your art can help us organize to creatively cultivate our speech rights here in Chicago. Why? Because the City has limited our right to sell our speech/art locally. Chicago’s laws and parks policies have strangled any hope of organizing ongoing open-air art scenes where artists can sell their art freely.

WHAT
The Free Speech Artists’ Movement created the Art Patch Project using the humble patch as a forum to create a discussion of your rights to sell art in public. We seek your art — your expressions — for patch designs that we will print and give away to the public. On each patch outside the artwork we will add your name, your copyright, the artwork title, your website or e-mail and the Free Speech Artists’ Movement website address. We have over 100 designs at present and the collection continues to grow. Already we have enough to capture the public’s imagination on any art patch giveaway adventure we embark on. Exhibits are planned in the future that will showcase this growing body of art to tell the world of our freedom fight.

SUBMITTING
There is no official theme but art on the theme of freedom, free speech, artist power, and justice issues of any type are likely to inspire the volunteers who print the patches. Cartoons and fine art sketches are encouraged as well. Graphic black and white art works well. The artist retains all copyrights. You donate only the use of the design on patches for us to print and give away and for our online use to promote the Free Speech Artists’ Movement until you notify us in writing otherwise.

To submit your black and white line art for patches, attach a 300 dpi graphic file to an e-mail to umcac@art-teez.org. In the body of your e-mail, provide your name, contact information, your website address if you have one, the title of your art, and a short bio. or artist’s statement. Or send us your information and a copy of your artwork on an 8.5”x11” sheet of white paper to UM-CAC, 1630 W. Wilson Ave., Chicago, IL 60640. We recommend that you visit our Screen Print Workshop for Artists to better understand the screen print process. The patches will be printed around 5”x3” in size. The exact size will vary with the shape of the artwork you provide us. Artists who want to screen print and pass out their own patch designs are invited to attend our workshop.

VOLUNTEERING
Free Speech Artists’ Movement volunteers will print patches. In selected public locations volunteers will give away the mixed art patch designs to maximize the variety of designs distributed to the public so that as they are handed out each person gets a different design from those around them. This will create a public art event to excite conversation and interest.

We will exhibit all the art patch designs artists have submitted each year in our T-shirt Art Harvest Festival the last weekend in September. We will be seeking volunteers to create additional exhibits to be shown locally or in other cities to increase awareness of our freedom fight. We will create the awareness needed to make street art a cultural phenomenon in the City of Chicago. If you come through our Screen Print Workshop and help us print patches, we will help you build a line of art patches of your own. There is room for everyone to get involved at whatever level they wish. Volunteers from the public at large are invited to learn how to screen print by helping us print patches.

Call us at 773-561-7676 to ask how you can help out.

How the heck do I polka along to The Polkaholics?!

Polkaing Fool #1
Stand opposite to your partner (#2).
Place your right hand on #2’s waist. Extend your left hand, palm up, to your side with your arm bent.
Grasp #2’s hand in a loose grip.

Polkaing Fool #2
Put your left hand on your partner’s (#1) R shoulder.
Bend your right elbow and place the palm of your right hand lightly on #1’s outstretched palm.

Step forward with your right foot.
Step forward with your left foot and bring it together with your right.
Repeat.

Do the opposite of what #1 does.

Just prior to the 1st beat, do a small hop off your left foot.

Step back with your right foot when #1 moves his left foot forward on the 1st beat.

Stand with your feet together.

Do a little hop with your left foot.

Do the opposite of what #1 does.

Just prior to the first beat, do a small hop off your right foot.

Step forward with your right foot.

Step forward with your left foot.

Step forward with your right foot and bring it together with your left.

Continue following, in reverse, the directions for #1.