

## No Sacrifice Too Great

Looking for food as I dig through the trash  
 The capitalist system will not get my cash  
 Sometimes it is hard, but I'll be ok  
 Because it's amazing what people will just throw away

No issue is too small  
 No sacrifice too great  
 We've got to save it all  
 Before it is too late

Riding my bike home from Critical Mass  
 There's two feet of snow but I'm still saving gas  
 My feet are really cold, my shoes are homemade  
 But no little kid had to work as a slave

It's time to take control of how we live  
 We've got to raise our voice  
 and stand for something

It's time to make a change and start to give  
 If you don't take a stand  
 you'll fall for anything at all

-Good Clean Fun

# I my bike.

a short ride to Bubbly Dynamics and was warm inside. About 10-15 people showed up throughout the day. I picked out a little kid's bike frame. It had a small seat, a wheel, a long chain, and a kickstand. I found a BMX bike handlebar, a mountain bike handlebar, another small tire, some extra pipe to cut down to raise the flower banana seat I found, and got to work. I asked a lot of questions and kept Chopper Bob from building a bike. I told him I owed him dinner. At the end of the day (near 8 p.m. when Joseph picked me up) I had a working bike. I used a hacksaw, a drill press, a filer, and crescent wrench, cut my finger one layer of skin shy of drawing blood, and saw how a chain tool is used (sadly, I didn't realize my chain has a couple too many links in it until I got home). It was a blast! I can't wait to strip it apart, prime it, paint it, and apply vinyl graphics and a horn. Its name is 'wobbly rainbow' and it's an awesome bike! The Rat Patrol is great! They liked the badges I made. I wish I could do more. I gave Matt \$20 to go toward the St. Ratrick's Day

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Parade fund." Oh, the adventures we've had since then! From raising the eyebrows of Lance Armstrong wannabes on the Lakefront Path, to feeling like the sober sister to Hi Guy; winding through Riverside streets to pick up weekly vegetables, to setting the unofficial pace for the Big Shoulders Realty Bike Winter neighborhood tour series; I know you only have eyes for me since you bucked the only other soul to dare ride you off at the Rainbow Cone ride with JoeM500 and friends. Though a few Rats scoffed at your paint job, many have mistakenly called you a Stingray, and some have suggested the addition of gears, I always have and always will love you just the way you are. My perfect Rat bike. My one true bike love.

May we have  
 t h o u s a n d s  
 more miles  
 together!

Love,  
 willow



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## Ride of Silence

Last year I rode in the Chicago Ride of Silence and discovered the Ghost Bike Urban Trail here in Chicago that is not far from Daley Plaza. Some of the riders cried at each Ghost Bike stop and that was about the only verbal sound. A "Happy Friday" ride this is not. It is an opposite kind of ride open to anyone who ever rides a bicycle or other non-motorized cycle.

The Ride of Silence starts to roll around the planet at 7 p.m., May 19, wherever one may be. This ride has occurred in Antarctica and various other nations, and all over the U.S. This annual ride is a silent memorial (almost a funeral procession) to remember the non-motorized cyclists who were hit and killed by a motor vehicle while that cyclist was riding somewhere on some public roadway. The ride also honors all riders who have been hit, no matter how minor or major the injury. Please attend and let the silence roar in Chicago and all over the world. No RSVP required. -B. & W.

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## Chicago Ride of Silence Planning Meetings

Help plan the 2010 Chicago Ride of Silence. Please join us at any/all of our monthly planning meetings (open to all) at the REI in Lincoln Park's meeting room (1466 N. Halsted St.). We will meet on the following Mondays at 7 p.m.: 3/29, 4/26, (5/24 and 6/28 if needed). The Ride of Silence is a silent procession of bicyclists to honor those who have been killed or injured while bicycling on public roadways. The Ride of Silence is on May 19, 2010 at 7 p.m. It's a free ride that aims to raise the awareness of motorists, police, and city officials that cyclists have a legal right to the public roadways. The ride is also a chance to show respect for those who have been killed or injured. The Ride of Silence will not be quiet. Contact information: [rideofsilence.chicago@gmail.com](mailto:rideofsilence.chicago@gmail.com) [rideofsilence.org/chicago](http://rideofsilence.org/chicago) 773-370-2038

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*with the help of Johnny Payphone and  
 23, 2003 Dear Diary. I built a bike today.  
 wrote on the day you were born: "February  
 I want to share with you a journal entry. I  
 In honor of Valentine's Day and St. Ratrick's,*

*Dear wobbly rainbow.*

## An open love letter to my funny bike

Welcome to the March 2010 issue of The  
 Derailleur, an unofficial publication of Chicago  
 Critical Mass. To contribute to future issues or to  
 host an assembly party, write to [TheDerailleur@gmail.com](mailto:TheDerailleur@gmail.com). THANK YOU: Lee Diamond of Big  
 Shoulders Realty, Rat Patrol, Matt the Rat, Sarah  
 Kaplan, Johnny Payphone, Chopper Bob, Alex  
 Wilson, Al the Pal, Bubbly Dynamics, John Edel,  
 Don Lambert, Joseph Zmuda, B. & W., Ride of  
 Silence, da' square wheelman, and Good Clean  
 Fun. -willow

*Chopper Bob. It was remarkably easy! I got  
 up and was out Joseph's door by 6:30, and  
 in the shower nursing my poor cold toes by  
 8:30, and had time to play with the cats and  
 the Rat's house (he lives a block from me).  
 Sarah showed up. We rode our bikes down  
 the alleys to the Red Line. I lugged my bike  
 up two flights of stairs to get to the handicap  
 access gate for the train (yeah, I said two  
 flights of stairs). I loaded up my CTA card,  
 went through the gate, and was unable to  
 carry my bike up the next two flights of stairs.  
 Sarah helped me, I was really embarrassed,  
 then recovered by the time the next train  
 came. All three of us got on one car for one  
 stop then Sarah moved to the next car back  
 (two-bike limit per car). The ride was nice;  
 Matt and I talked about apartments (he and  
 Sarah looked at apartments in my building;  
 apparently living in a castle is popular) and  
 work. We got to the 35th Street stop, took our  
 bikes on the escalator (Whee!), then out the  
 handicap gate and onto the streets. It was*

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## Locating Critical Mass

Critical Mass is a mobile space unlike those that are often meaningless precisely because they are stationary: streets, parking lots, and parks. Folks normally move through and along the spaces, rarely stopping to acknowledge their significance, and perhaps more importantly, their effect on them.

Massers, on the other hand, move past and often through them giving each a new, if temporary, meaning. This in many regards is the essence of Critical Mass. It is a gathering point; a space between different places as well as between the bikers themselves that functions as the dynamic foundation for a mobile social network. The street, the parking lot, and park all become a zone that we know in a new way by connecting with them without having the destination most find at the ends

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moving point on the temporal continuum of the street. It is the Massers who stop to exert their reading, their observation of the streetscape in order to fix it in a point in time and space.

This is to say that flaneurs are not dead, gone with the arcades of modern Paris. All Massers, as street-users, are implicated in a flanerie of necessity in this period of late capital. We find ourselves exposed to a range of message systems in the streetscape – information networks that represent the global village in our very own local thoroughfares.

It is Critical Mass that exposes bikers, in their corner of the world to the multiple discourses of the urban environment. The Mass is one of the few open locations away from comfort points in the home, shopping mall or school. A space that is inhabited, yet common, invested with multiple meanings and ownerships simultaneously.

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of the street.

This makes it both an implicit display and an explicit but assumed feature of the street. Although outsiders might rarely stop to acknowledge the formative influence of the street, the Mass, as a product of a culture that occurs in the street, is significant and requires examination. In *The City: An Urban Cosmology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999) J. Grange observes that the street functions primarily as a temporal location that incorporates fluid combinations of time: "Time in the street is the continual collision of the past and the future with the present. There is no time to stop and recollect the past. It simply 'comes by.' The future streams into the present with such immediacy that it could be said to implode into the present." (109)

It provides a location in movement and renewal in progress. It represents the

*Critical Mass has no itinerary*

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We might see the Mass functioning in terms of what Giroux labeled public pedagogies; those informal pedagogical practices that "...are not restricted to schools, blackboards, and test taking. ... Such sites operate within a wide variety of social institutions and format including sports and entertainment media, cable television networks, churches and channels of elite and popular culture, such as advertising. Profound transformations have taken place in the public space." (Giroux 498)

It is an active host of public pedagogies (such as the roadside billboard, or traffic sign) and a pedagogical force of its own contextualization. As urban flaneurs Massers negotiate the streetscapes whilst being bombarded with information flows as public pedagogies, each drawing their own discursive formations and identity forming

*Critical Mass is both host and horde*

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simultaneous desire for a future but also a shedding of the past. The latter is the desire for an ever-shifting destination point. Unlike the street itself, which demands a return journey, here we have total involvement, an immediate connection, a mobile space where time is removed in search of no real end point – that immediately physical, but also very much conceptual end of the street – the destination point.

*Critical Mass is an ever-shifting point*

*Critical Mass is instructive*

The Mass is a zone of unconscious assumptions. As Massers roll they reflect on it; thus the Mass shapes bikers and enters their identity as a formative site of the urban experience. We find located in the street very specific and deliberate information markers, right up to the point where the street is the information marker as with the information

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practices. In itself, the Mass becomes a vibrant location of information flows, discursive practice – public pedagogies.

And it is this that incorporates Massers as unwitting flaneurs. They absorb the flows and constructions of the Mass and its streetscape and interact as individuals contextualized by the urban environment. They read their way through urban habitats with the Mass creating a path to those key points of destination. Massers draw meaning as they pass through the streetscape and as it

responds to them, washing over them with images and representations of the global, urban space.

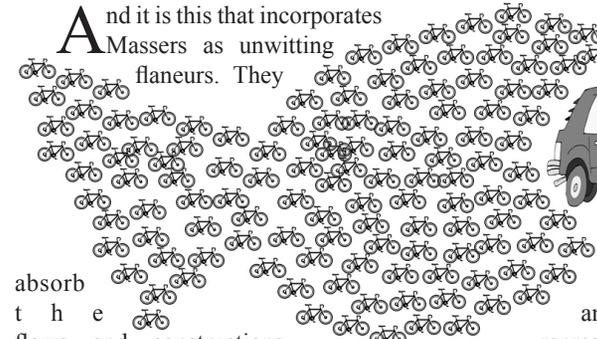
superhighway. The street comes to be a site of knowledge and discourse, in constant interplay and renewal, presented to bikers as they roll through.

The French Situationists, though writing in the 1960s about pedestrians, noted that for the Flaneur, that streetwalker and social critic of fin de siecle Paris, the street offered a key location for the play of the social that would become Critical Mass 30 years later. "The Flaneur lives his life as a succession of absolute beginnings. From the past, there is an easy exit; the present is just a gateway; the future is not yet, and what is not yet cannot bind." (Bauman 139) It is the flaneur that: "...is like a detective seeking clues who reads people's characters not only from the physiognomy of their faces but via a social physiognomy of the street." (Shields 63)

Massers, like flaneurs, read the street. From the detective like gathering of information on the street, they operate as a

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Critical Mass, as both a physical entity and imagined space, is implicit in the construction of meaning via this publicly instructive capacity. As such, it warrants more serious attention as a location of the construction of the social and location in which discursive formations find meaning and information flows present representations of our world.



## Velorutionize!

*Locating Critical Mass, an adaptation of Andrew Hickey's "Street Smarts/ Smart Streets: Public Pedagogies and the Streetscape." M/C Journal 9.3 (2006). <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0607/08-hickey.php> can be found at da' square wheelman's blog, bicycle-diaries.blogspot.com.*

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