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The Derailleur • June 2007

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Last ride: "It's a Memorial Day miracle!!"

From a driver: "It WAS a happy Friday until you guys started blocking my way."

Anyone else have any goodies? What's tickled your ribs on a ride?

-Dan Moran

Mini Ride for Climate Part II

Saturday, June 30, 2007, 9:00 a.m., 44.5 miles, 10 to 14 mph. REMOTE START: Chez Schubert, 1113 W. Webster - enter through the alley.

This ride attracted over 40 participants on Memorial Day this year. We never finished the ride. This time we will start in the middle and hope to get to the end in time to go back and do the start for anybody who missed it the first time.

We will ride down attractive streets to a natural food store that has herbs and vegetables growing on the roof, past several native plant gardens, to Helmut Jahn's wind turbines, the Bloomingdale trail, a recycling center for hazardous materials, past several car-sharing sites, atop a green roof, and to a slew of other green resources and projects. Bring your friends! Contact Kathy Schubert at 773.248.5499.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN'S LANDING RIDE

Saturday, July 7, 2007, noon, Queen's Landing (500 S. Lake Shore Drive, opposite Buckingham Fountain). FREE! www.foreverfreeandclear.org

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Actually, I (and I don't think that I'm alone in this) prefer the disagreement and lively debate (sometimes pushing the limits of prescribed relevance) that's been happening as of late to the near deadness in activity that this list has been experiencing between rides.

With all that said, I would like to urge more folks who subscribe to this list and who don't post to get involved in the conversation. It's okay, and I'm sure we all want to hear what you think.

Again, a personal thanks to all the regular posters who have been contributing their views, news, and what-have-you. I've learned a lot about things in the "bikesphere" and other areas over my years of being subscribed here, and I hope lively discussion continues into the future. You can be sure that I will do my part to make sure that there's at least "something" here. ;) I love you all – vote for me in '08!

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During the November Mass it was amazing to pedal down North Michigan Drive with more than a thousand happy friends on a nice evening demonstrating to the shoppers that there are alternatives to what they take for granted to be essential. I pedaled along the edge of the street, making eye contact smilingly, saying, "Biking is more fun than shopping," and seeing the nods of lots of people with many bags in their hands. I love the looks on people's faces. For some, it's just their jaw dropping when they see all of these people who are challenging their assumptions. For others, it's "WHAT IS THIS???" when they see all of those people on bikes.

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On a ride last summer, we were tooling up Rush Street. A girl on the sidewalk was talking excitedly into her cell phone: "There must be at least 100,000 of them!"

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Am I the only one here who thinks that the discussion on this list has been rather good as of late? We've got bikes and cars and peds and weapons, rainbows, ha ha's, nudes and such. (Sorta like the beginning of a theme song.) I'd like to thank all parties (even Travis) for stepping up to the keyboard and letting themselves be heard.

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One of my favorite CCM stories is from the Delay Plaza 5th birthday ride back in 2002. This was back before the days of loud, thumping mobile bike sound systems, so reveling riders relied on their own unamplified vocal chords, bursting into numerous, spontaneous rounds of “Happy Birthday” throughout the ride. We pedaled by one guy’s apartment in Lincoln Park who happened to be celebrating his birthday. He was pleasantly surprised to be repeatedly serenaded as the ride slowly passed by his balcony. Cheers.

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ON THE LAST RIDE SOME POLICE OFFICERS ON LOUDSPEAKERS WERE TRYING TO GET US OUT OF THE LINCOLN/ASHLAND/BELMONT INTERSECTION. ONE WAS ALL, “KEEP MOVING. WE NEED TO LET THESE CARS THROUGH!” “LET THESE CARS THROUGH.” HUH. BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, THAT’S WHAT WE HERE AT CHICAGO CRITICAL MASS ARE ALL ABOUT. DO I SMELL A NEW SLOGAN?

ALSO, I WAS RIDING IN A BIKINI TOP LAST AUGUST (WITH “FUCK CARS, LET’S BIKE” PAINTED ON MY BACK, NO LESS) WHEN SOME PEDESTRIAN YELLED, “WOO! CRITICAL MASS!!! I WISH I WAS YOUR BRA!” NOT EXACTLY OVERHEARD, BUT AMUSING NEVERTHELESS.

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In order of what I thought were the very best:

1) A lady with a huge nose rolling down her car window to say to us, “You’ll are a bunch of f..ing morons. You’ll are a bunch of f..ing morons.”

2) The man who fell head over heels over his handlebars when he squeezed his left brake. He said, “Well, I didn’t spill any beer.”

3) In response to the neighborhood police when they turned on their “wooo-wooo” loud audio to get our attention: Hundreds of riders calling “woooo-woooo” back.

These have stood out above all the others I saw and heard and were priceless.

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Once when the Mass was passing the HUB on Marshall there were these two kids who exclaimed, “Not again!”

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(1) Two or three years ago, on Armitage Avenue, a man was coming out of a restaurant, saw all the bikes, and asked what was going on. Upon being told, he said, “Oh. For a minute I didn’t know if I was in Chicago or Amsterdam!”

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So a cyclist not paying attention causes another cyclist to fall during a Critical Mass. People approach and ask if the fallen cyclist is OK. "Of course I'm OK, IDIOTS! I'm wearing my helmet!!!"

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"Cars are stinky." Said by a little kid.

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Aurora Butterfly used to yell out to people sitting in sidewalk cafes, "Don't forget where you parked your car!" I thought that was pretty funny.

Another funny thing she used to yell out to cagers was, "You can't stop us from loving you!"

Sometimes when passersby yell out to the Mass, "What are you riding for?" I will reply, "Irritable Bowel Syndrome!" to poke fun at all the charitable organizations that have co-opted recreational bicycling to raise money to combat horrible diseases that our government should be funding by taxing the rich.

Not funny, but I like to inform pedestrians gathering on street corners, "This is what a car-free world looks like, people. Clean, quiet, pollution-free transportation."

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On the last ride we did a hold up (at Lincoln and Sheffield?). This tall, well-built, formidable-looking, punk/rockabilly type starts screaming out at the crowd, "You fucking hippies, go home and wash off the patchouli!" I turned and yelled back at him, "It's sandalwood, you prick!" Get this, he then proceeds to put his helmet on and mount his scooter. Yeah, I'm planning my remake of the Wild Bunch, and this guy's high on my list for Brando's role.

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"OH SHI-YEAAAAHH!" 7- to 9-year-old boy with mother.

The non-vocal is best though, the belly laughs. When they lose the power of speech.

When the little kids just go apeshit and involuntarily dance/convulse. It's like OOOoWha! WHteh?

Smiling, open-mouthed, eyebrows cocked.

Applause, yells of all forms, from three floors up, hanging out the window, screeching.

How about "Thank you for dressing as bunnies!" -- which is just so surreal to me.

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My favorite Critical Mass moment was on a Halloween ride about three years ago when a very irate nun tried to drive through the Mass and was stopped and corked by three Satans.

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