

The Derailleur • August 2007

Welcome to the August 2007 issue of The Derailleur. The Derailleur is an unofficial publication of Chicago Critical Mass (chicagocriticalmass.org). Send submissions to TheDerailleur@gmail.com.

This issue is a slightly edited version of a letter I wrote to Rick Kogan ages ago and is for ho'ard who wrote, in response to my letter, "I nominate [willow's] letter to be an entire issue of the Derailleur all by itself!!!!!"

Riding a bike has changed my life and I am grateful to the people who have been a part of those changes – people I wouldn't have met if it weren't for Chicago Critical Mass.

Special thanks to Kathy Schubert and Mr. Bike for the announcements and to my sweetie for getting (and keeping) me on a bike, introducing me to CCM, and loving me unconditionally.

Happy Friday!

–willow naeco

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COME ON OUT TO



**MR.
BIKE'S**

WINDI CITI

BIKE PARADE

FRIDAY OCT. 26  5:30 pm

MEET AT DALEY PLAZA

BRING YOUR BICYCLE!

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

DRESS UP FOR HALLOWEEN!

(PRIZE FOR BEST COSTUME)

MORE AT www.mrbike.com/parade

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Joey's Birthday Ride

Show Me Your Shelters



Meet at Waveland Clock Tower (3700 N. Lake Shore Dr.) on Sunday, September 23 at 9:00 a.m.

Celebrate Joey (min.) Schnauzer's 14th birthday as we pass by various animal shelters on a 30-mile ride at 10-14 mph. Persons riding with dogs on bicycles or in bicycle trailers are especially welcome. There will be a lunch stop at an outdoor cafe that accepts dogs or a BYO in our backyard.

Joey will be wearing her helmet. Will you be doing the same? Kathy and Joey both request that you do so. Suggestions for riding with your dog can be found at www.kangarooconnection.com/dogsonbicycles.html.

RSVP: Kathy at kangarookathy@yahoo.com or 773.248.5499.

Sponsored by chicagocyclingclub.org.

Following is a slightly edited version of the letter I wrote to Rick Kogan in response to an article in the Chicago Tribune in which Kogan suggests that people should get to know and love Chicago by driving around the city in a car. At the time, I had only one year of Chicago-living, car-freedom, and bike-love under my belt. I hope you enjoy the letter.

April 30, 2003

Dear Rick,

If you really want to know Chicago, I highly recommend exploring it by bicycle. Don't have a bike? Go to Working Bikes and the people there will gladly get you pedaling or go to Uptown Bikes on Broadway (near the Wilson Red Line stop), or build your own bike from pieces found in the alley.

Be sure to get (and wear) a helmet, a water bottle, and a map by the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation. A bike lock and sunscreen would also do you some good. With this minimal amount of gear you are

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free to explore the Chicago one cannot experience driving around in an automobile.



The CBF map will act as your guide for roads deemed safer for cyclists, but your curiosity might lead you down streets you never knew existed.

The lakefront path, while nice, is best during the “off-season” (once leaves fall off the trees and the temperature drops) and only the “brave souls” are out and about.

If you enjoy an obstacle course, by all means ride your bike on the path from the north side to McCormick Place during the warm months.

I’ve found more pleasure the further south I go on the path and will take a break at a skate park crowded with kids doing crazy tricks on their boards before settling in at the sidelines at Calumet Park for a women’s flag football game.

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Meet at the Waveland Clock Tower (3700 N. Lake Shore Dr.) at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 3 (Labor Day).

A 36-mile tour at 10-14 mph of interesting mosaic tile art on the North and West sides and in the Loop.

Please wear your helmet.

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3rd Annual Tour de Tiles

presented by chicagocyclingclub.org & cyclingsisters.org



If you have the need and the nerve (automobile traffic is bad near the casino), there is a bike shop open for repairs and conversation just over the border in Hammond.

How do I know this? While on a ride near Calumet Park, a friend's tire was sliced by glass on the road.

Seven kids ran over to us and escorted us to a "bike shop" a couple blocks away.

The "bike shop" turned out to be an automobile repair shop with a mechanic on staff who repairs the neighborhood kids' bikes. One of the mechanics drove my friend to the bike shop in Hammond, while another friend and I rode our bikes there.

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If you're tired at this point, take the bus or ride your bike to the 95th Street Red Line, which will get you on your way home (except during rush hour).

I'm not sure when the restrooms open at Calumet Park but I've found that the merchants near the park are willing (and friendly about it) to let you use their restroom.

If you're still in the mood for riding, thank the convenience store employee for use of their restroom by getting a snack or catch lunch at T's Tap before hopping on your bike and pedaling to the Little Village area, where you can hop off to do some shopping with the masses and enjoy the flexibility one has on a bicycle navigating through automobile traffic.

Take a ride through Douglas Park near Mt. Sinai Hospital (the emergency room staff is excellent, by the way, in case a man in a Beretta hits you and drives off, leaving you unconscious in the middle



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Critical Mass is a great way to explore Chicago if you're nervous about going to unfamiliar parts of town alone and it is the way I've gone from knowing only my sweetie in this huge city to having a network of awesome friends I run into at the strangest times and places, all because we choose to ride a bike.

Get pedaling!

Sincerely,

willow naeco

I received a note from Rick Kogan May 9, 2003 in response to my letter, in which he wrote, "I used to do a great deal of bike riding throughout the city but it's been years. Your lovely, passionate letter will get me, so to speak, back in the saddle. Thanks. onward, Rick"



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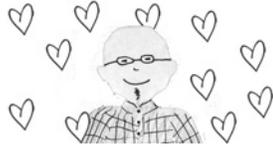
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Who got me into bikes?
My sweetie.



How did I learn about Working Bikes, Uptown Bikes, the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, the Rat Patrol, Bubbly Dynamics, The Handlebar, Cycling Sisters, and Bike Winter?
Chicago Critical Mass.



What’s Chicago Critical Mass? It’s a parade on bikes (all are welcome, even your pets) that meets the last Friday of every month at Daley Plaza, 5:30 p.m.

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The park is much larger than it looks from the road and there are many things to see. Last weekend I taught my friends how to find frogs, we saw a goose nesting about 20 feet high in a tree, and I rescued a set of handlebars to donate to the Rat Patrol’s nest at Bubbly Dynamics (the members’ bike-building creativity is invaluable; I built a wonderful funny bike for free thanks to them).



Even if you’re a bike stud, you’ve got to be hungry for dinner by now, so I highly recommend going to The Handlebar, which has plenty of bike parking in the rear. The food is delicious and if you don’t know what a funny bike looks like, there’s one hanging on the wall.

Maybe you’ll overhear conversation about the Cycling Sisters’ recent bike trip to Old

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Orchard Mall or their upcoming workshops on bike maintenance, or perhaps you'll strike up a conversation of your own with other people enjoying food at The Handlebar. If you're pooped out at this point, there are buses and trains to the rescue.

Hopefully you've taken your family and/or friends with you, but if not, you will certainly have many stories to tell about your adventures that day.

Being on a bicycle exposes you to people on the street you never would have had the opportunity to say hello to (or maybe never would have noticed) because of the barrier an automobile creates.

On a bike you get an intimate look at what the neighborhoods are like, how they are changing, and best of all, the true feeling of the neighborhoods as you encounter the people who live there.

Since beginning my exploration of Chicago by



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Since beginning my exploration of Chicago by



bike, I've discovered many things about myself and the city I now call home.

I've lived in Chicago for just over a year (transplanted from Kingston, New York and before that, Palouse, Washington) and have been riding a bike for less than a year but already it has immensely improved my life.

Before riding a bike, I was confined to the 20-minute radius I was willing to walk beyond the stops provided by CTA buses and trains, which gave me a limited view of Chicago.



Now that I'm on a bike, I'm free to explore any neighborhood I want, all the while getting exercise (which eliminated my recurring winter depression thanks to help from Bike Winter events and workshops which kept me riding all winter).

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