

The *D e r a i l l e u r*

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Welcome to the 2007 Polkarailleur! If tradition is followed, the ride will twist and turn its way to a Polkaholics concert, so freshen up your polka knowledge by reading **Dandy Don's** *Compiling the Extreme Polka REVOLUTION!* on page 3. After that, head on over to page 8 for **Reverend H. Antiford's** informative article about how you can help save the polar bears by participating in the *Chicago Auto Show SHUTDOWN Fest*, an event which could inspire you to create an anti-car or pro-bike artistic masterpiece for inclusion in this year's *Critical Mass Art Show* (details from **Cathy Haibach** begin on page 10). And then it's time to laugh with **Bobby** in her *Quickie Account from a Local Bike Shop Cashier* on page 12. Your tears of laughter will change to sadness when you read *My beloved bike* by **Matthew DiPietro** on page 15. If you've experienced a similar loss, perhaps the **Chicago Stolen Bike Registry** can make you realize you're not alone and that you can prevent future losses. Information about this valuable resource follows Matthew's poem. Winter Wimp? **Thomas Cordery** gets the last laugh on the back cover. You can experience more of his wit at the ICEBIKE listserv. Saddle up, stay warm, and polka, polka, polka all night long!

Submissions Needed: If you would like to contribute articles, illustrations, ideas, etc., send them to TheDeraileur@gmail.com by the 8th of each month. Complimentary copy available upon publication (sorry, no payment).

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Compiling the Extreme Polka REVOLUTION!



Extreme Polka! That's right, pal, the new polka revolution that has been bubbling up from the underground in the 1990s and 2000s now has an official name, having been dubbed "Extreme Polka" by our friends over at Cleveland International Records. And with

a name like that, you know it has to be one helluva kick in the dupa!! What am I talking about, you ask? Why, none other than the fabulous six-song "Extreme Polka" CD that you just can't live without! And just like the extreme polka movement, this collection is short, wild, and extremely great! How great is it, you ask? Well, get a load of the sensational artists and songs on this compilation: The Polkaholics with "Polkas on Guitar," Polkacide with their anthem "Oyez/Kielbasa, Beer, & Sauerkraut," Brave Combo with polka gems "Flying Saucer" and "Down at the Friendly Tavern," Big Lou The Accordion Princess with the non-stop "Go Man Go," and a Drew Carey (that's right - Drew Carey!?!) & Frank Yankovic collaboration on the infamous "Too Fat Polka." Any one of these tunes is well worth the price of this CD (\$7.98, or a little over a buck a tune - go to <http://clevelandintl.com/extremepolka.htm> for more info.), so how can you lose? Hey pal, if you want the perfect six-pack for any party, "Extreme Polka" is definitely it!

Now if "Extreme Polka" whets your appetite for polka destruction, you might also want to consider its sire-apparent,



"Polka Comes to Your Haus!" Put out in 1990 by Restless Records, this 13-song compilation CD chronicles the exploits of the "new wave" polka movement of the 1980s. Interestingly, just as on "Extreme Polka," both Polkacide and Brave Combo

lend their polkatic talents to this CD (five of the 13 songs are by Polkacide or Brave Combo), proving how seminal these two great bands have been and continue to be. Most of the additional cuts are by bands who may not be together anymore, but who certainly shone like a bunch of crazy polka diamonds back in the day! This is Old School, extreme polka-style! For example, there's Rotondi (very tongue-in-cheek polkateers from LA), Polish Muslims (Detroit's wild n' woolly polka assimilators), Das Furlines (all-girl band dressed to kill in spandex and dirndls, with their monster hit "Nichts Nein Frankenstein"), and Mark Shurilla and the Blackholes (you HAVE to hear their song "Blitzkrieg over Kenosha" - this is polka insanity at its best!). And with liner notes, band photos, and contact information, this CD is a gold mine for those of you out there trying to piece together the incredible history that polka is! So how do you put your sweaty lil' palms on this awesome CD, you ask? That might seem like a bit of a polka problem, given that it was released over 10 years ago and is long out of print. Well, why not do as I did and get it on eBay! I've seen it on auction several times for reasonable prices, so it's definitely out there to be had. So do yourself a favor, pal, and have this polka come to your haus!! Believe me, this is one houseguest that you'll be happy to have

around! And if any of those unwanted houseguests do show up at your door, just crank this CD on full blast and they'll be on their not-so-merry way (if they don't leave, they can't be all that bad, right?).



Well, if those last two CDs haven't already blown your mind to the preeminent polka possibilities that are out there, then I have another CD to lay on you that is guaranteed to put you on a polka trip you'll never forget! Released in February 2002 (hey – that's 2/2 and polka is 2 beats! Coincidence? I think not! Therefore, I am not!!), the "American Polka" compilation CD put out by Trikont from Germany (www.trikont.de) is the most amazing polka compilation that has ever been assembled. For starters, the variation on this 25-song collection is stupendous! For example, in terms of more traditional polka, pretty much every style of American polka is represented. There's Polish style polka by Li'l Wally, Ampol Aires, Li'l Richard, and Walt Solek; Dutchmen style by Whoopee John and Karl & the Country Dutchmen; Slovenian style by Frankie Yankovic; Tex-Mex Conjunto by Narcisco Martinez; Tex-Czech style by Joe Patek's Orchestra and the Shiner Hobo Band; and Scandinavian sounds by the Lager-Olsen Quartet. All of these artists are giants in their genres, and it's very rare to find one polka compilation that cuts across so many polka divisions. But, that's just the start. You see, this CD also includes a very healthy (or unhealthy, depending on your point of view) dose of modern polka experimentalists

and extreme polkatists, including Polkacide, Brave Combo, The Polkaholics, Happy Schnapps Combo, Polish Muslims, Das Furlines, Los Lobos, Elliott Sharp, and Guy Klusevsek. Plus, the CD comes with a 22-page booklet (half in German and half in English) with extensive polka history (written by ace musicologist Christoph Wagner), band bios and information, and a whole slew of amazing photos (many of them by the incredible shoot-first-ask-questions-later photographer Dick Blau of "Polka Happiness" fame) that portray and define a thousand American polka stories. My favorite photo is the one on the back cover showing polka pal Kali dancing with my dad! I admit that I am pretty biased about this CD, but I know that with one listen and look at it, you'll hear and see what I mean.



Finally, two other fine CDs with a little more emphasis on traditional polka also deserve mentioning. First, there's the third edition of the ever-popular "Here Comes the Polka Heroes, Volume 3," put out by Cleveland International Records. This edition includes

some modern polka sounds from Big Lou and The Polkaholics, as well as more traditional polkas from Li'l Wally, Bob Doszak, John Stanky, and The Smilin' Scandinavians, to mention a few. All in all, there are 26 polkas here from mostly current polka bands that are out there polkaing their fannies off every weekend. Also, this volume seems to have a broader range of styles than the last two volumes of this series, which had more emphasis on Slovenian bands perhaps (after all, Cleveland is

the center of Slovenian polka). It's definitely a CD that won't leave your player without a dance!



Believe it or not, Time-Life has also got infected with the polka itch, releasing "The Time-Life Treasury of Polka," a two-disc, 30-song collection that pays tribute to many great polka artists of the past and present, and includes a very good mix of polka styles.

Some of the past polka giants include Frank Yankovic, Li'l Wally, Six Fat Dutchmen, Walk Solek, Lawrence Welk, Myron Floren, Happy Louie, and Larry Chesky. Some of the more current artists include a cavalcade of some of the best-known polka bands of the 1970s and beyond, such as Eddie Blazonczyk, The Dynatones, Lenny Gomulka, Joe Oberaitis, and Brave Combo (notice that BC are on almost every compilation in this article—they are popular polka pushers!!). Carl Finch of Brave Combo does a commendable job commenting on the condensed history of polka on the five-page liner notes, including helpful descriptions of how the many American styles differ.

Writing about the recent polka resurgence, he notes, "Polka music is making more sense to the masses again." There it is, irrefutable proof that the polka revolution is in full swing! So hey, pal, what do you say? Are you with us, or against us? C'mon and join the extreme polka fun!

—Dandy Don

Chicago Auto Show SHUTDOWN Fest 2007

Dozens of Bicycle-Riding Polar Bears Strike Back at Cars & Global Warming



The polar bears are angry. And they're coming to Chicago to fight for their home and confront one of the largest sources of global warming—America's over-reliance on the private automobile.

As daily headlines describe how global warming and the melting of the Arctic ice cap are resulting in the widespread drowning of polar bears, the bears have decided to fight back.

"Most Americans probably don't realize that when they hop in their cars, they are killing us," said Snowball, a 1,000-pound polar bear who's headed to Chicago. "Automobiles are a major producer of greenhouse gases, which contribute to global warming and the destruction of the polar bear habitat. Every day, the arctic ice is getting thinner, and more polar bears are drowning. The Auto Show offers no real solutions to these problems; instead, it wants Americans to spend more money buying cars, more money building highways and on other car-

centric development, and more time driving more miles. Our city, our nation, and our planet deserve better. That's why we need to SHUT DOWN this orgy of automobile glorification." Snowball and dozens of his furry friends will join hundreds of Chicago cyclists at Daley Plaza on Saturday, February 10, at 11 a.m., and then ride to the Chicago Auto Show. A peaceful Auto Show SHUTDOWN Festival to save the polar bear habitat will commence at 12 noon at the Cermak Road entrance to McCormick Place.



Snowball

Auto Show SHUTDOWN festivities will include:

- A Polar Bear Bicycle Parade & Stunt Riding Demonstration!
- A live performance by the Chicago Car Alarm Symphony!
- Polar Bears Juggling Mufflers & Snow Tires!
- An Unveiling & Test-Riding of the Cheap & Non-polluting Vehicles of Tomorrow!

Save Snowball—Stop Driving!

"It's time to save Snowball and all the polar bears," said Dan Korn, an Auto Show SHUTDOWN Festival ringleader. "Chicago cyclists are proud to join up with our friends the polar bears to help save their homeland. If we could invest just a bit more to give people reliable, safe, and clean transportation options, and to encourage more people to take advantage of the alternatives

they already have instead of glorifying cars and promoting even more driving, then maybe we could save Snowball and all of the other polar bears, not to mention the lives of those 40,000-plus human beings killed in car crashes every year in the U.S.”

In conjunction with the Auto Show SHUTDOWN Festivities, pro-polar-bear and anti-global-warming artists will be celebrating the opening of the Critical Mass Art Show on Friday, February 9, 6:30 p.m., at Mercury Cafe, 1505 W. Chicago Ave. in Chicago.

—Reverend H. Antiford
Church of Christ without Cars



For more information about the Auto Show SHUTDOWN Festival and the Critical Mass Art Show, visit AutoShowShutdown.org, the Chicago Bike Winter calendar at bikewinter.org, or call Dan Korn at 312.505.9307.

Critical Mass Art Show 2007

Ever had one of your creations in an art show? Whether you have or not, you're invited to participate in the upcoming Critical Mass Art Show, to be held at Mercury Cafe (1505 W. Chicago Ave. in Chicago). The Critical Mass Art Show celebrates the beauty of the bicycle through pro-bike and anti-car art and is created anew, each time it occurs, by the people participating in it. Anyone is welcome to submit and include their pro-bike

or anti-car themed art. The show offers a platform to those who wish to speak out about their love for the bicycle and the destruction automobiles cause to our society. This year the art will be accessible to the general public all day, every day, in a public cafe rather than tucked away in a gallery. Mercury Cafe is a big, warm, welcoming space that will bring the message to a much wider audience. But because this year's show is being held in a foodservice establishment, there are some rules regarding the cleanliness, size, and safety of artwork. Please contact talllucathy@yahoo.com with any questions or if you have an idea for a poetry night, gathering, knitting bee, or other event.

—Cathy Haibach

Critical Mass Art Show Dates & Times:



Feb. 4, noon-3 p.m. - art drop-off

Feb. 7, 6-9 p.m. - art drop-off

Feb. 8, 9-11 p.m. - hang show

Feb. 9, 7-10 p.m. - opening/
CCM Happy Hour

Feb. 23, 8-11 p.m. - closing (after
February CCM ride)

Show close/art pick-up TBD.



Quickie Account from a Local Bike Shop Cashier

I'm a weekend cashier at my local bike shop. It's a part-time job that I love for a variety of reasons, the discount being right up there among the top ten. Another reason I like working there, though, is because it provides me with a never-ending source for laughter.

Gorgeous days in Austin, Texas typically bring a lot of newbies into the shop. They're either dusting off and preparing their bikes for a ride, or they're coming in to fix a new, mid-ride problem. But whether a customer comes in pre-ride, mid-ride, or post-ride, I've made a habit of verifying the tube size when customers are obviously at the shop to fix a flat. With so many sizes, it's very easy to pick up the wrong size, and for many newbies it's very possible to not know which size to buy.

So, on this particular spring day, it's absolutely gorgeous outside, sunny but cool. A couple walks in, and with their jeans and long, baggy jackets, I immediately realize that they are newbies.

They wander around the store while I ring up the purchases for a few other customers. When they get to my cash register and all they're buying is a tube, I do my usual size verification, "Mountain bike, Schrader valve tube?"

The guy says, "Well, my tire says 26 tires 2.1. Will this work?"

"The size will work, but does your bike use a Schrader valve, like what's on a car tire? Or is it skinnier?"

"It's skinnier than the one on my car."

He had grabbed a Schrader valve tube, so I told him that he needed a different valve, and I fetched the Presta valve for him. When I got back to the counter, I rang up the tube and proceeded to ask if they had everything they needed. "You can use one of our pumps if you like, but do you have tire levers?"

"Tire levers? What's that?"

I picked up a pair from the counter behind me and explained how they can make taking the tire off so much easier than doing it by hand.

"No, no. I don't need that. I can do it myself."

And that's when his girlfriend piped up and asked him, "Are you sure you don't want to get those? We might need them."

"No, we won't need them. I can do it without that stuff."

No problem. He's certainly not the first customer to turn down buying tire levers. We complete the sale, I tell them to have a fun ride, and they're out the door.

I go on about my business, ringing people up, making sure they have the right tools for the job at hand, so on and so forth.

About 10 minutes later, the guy's girlfriend is back in line, looking a little embarrassed. "Can I go ahead and buy those tire levers from you?"

I don't laugh uncontrollably, but I do laugh. And when I calm down a little, it doesn't take long for me to bust out laughing some more while I ring her up; she couldn't help but laugh with me.

I decide that he shouldn't get off the hook so easily for sending his girlfriend in to buy the tire levers, so I complete the sale and accompany her outside to "check on his progress." There he is, in the front parking lot (where, I realize, he has been for the past 10 minutes) sitting Indian-style on the ground, helplessly looking at his wheel. Yes, I laughed some more.

I gave him a crash-course on how to fix his flat, which I think certainly made up for laughing [with him]. Then I went back inside before he finished airing up his tire.

I didn't see them again that afternoon, so I assume they had a wonderful ride—even if they did get a little warm in those baggy, oversized clothes.

—Bobby



My beloved bike

My beloved bike;
the empty place where I had locked it,
only minutes before.

—Matthew DiPietro

Chicago Stolen Bike Registry

stolen.bikechicago.info

The registry has two goals:

- To provide a public forum for the distribution of information about stolen bicycles, so that bicycles can get returned to their owners, and so that resale of listed stolen bicycles will be more difficult.
- To provide analysis of bicycle theft data, in the form of statistics and maps, to identify high risk factors for bicycle theft.

From the ICEBIKE listserv:

So at 10pm-ish I got off the commuter bus and prepared to bike home.

As I was unlocking, I heard this voice say, "Time to pack it in, buddy, it's **WINTER.**"

"No, no," I replied, "this is the best time."

I looked up to see this guy, standing about 10 feet away, arms akimbo, challenging me in a now belligerent voice.

"Yeah, if you're a **PSYCHO!**" he says.

"Oh you're pronouncing that wrong," sez me. "It's '**CYCLIST.**'"

—Thomas Cordery



ICEBIKE

Home of the winter cyclist (and other crazy people).