

ChainLinks

The newsletter of the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ)

Issue 5-2006



If petrol prices keep rising...

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The views expressed in *ChainLinks* are not necessarily those of CAN.

EDITORIAL

You Cyclists!

In the tearoom at work last week, one of my non-cycling colleagues was complaining about a cyclist he had encountered on his trip to work in his large 4WD. The cyclist had gone through a red light. A motorcyclist then piped up with his sad (sic) story of a cyclist who yelled at him when he rode his motorbike in a cycle-lane. Another non-cyclist then looked at me and said “I bet you don’t follow the road rules either, you cyclists are all the same”.

I have not really thought of myself as a typical cyclist and have in fact wondered if I should be editing ChainLinks at all as the only cycling I do is riding my bike to work five times a week – and if the weather is terrible I don’t always do that. All other travel is done via foot, bus or car.

However after some thought, I came up with some characteristics which make me one of “you cyclists”.



When I see someone pulling a mangled bike out of an accident scene, shivers run up my spine.



When a vehicle almost hits me, I get upset. (OK, actually I turn from a mild-mannered accountant into a yelling, swearing nutcase.)



When I drive a car, I treat cyclists as king of the road. (Need to cross a lane in busy traffic? Look for the car with the bright pink interior – the driver will hold up the traffic for your safety.)



I appreciate the fitness benefits of cycling, even though I am one of the slowest cyclists on the road. When I can’t be bothered going for a run, I know that at least I have had some exercise.



I know that starting my work day with a ride through the park beats sitting in a car in traffic.



I speak up for cyclists whenever I get a chance, as “us cyclists” are reducing traffic congestion and pollution and the safer it is for “us cyclists” the more of “us cyclists” there will be.

Jean Dorrell, ChainLinks Editor

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Still available: CAN ‘One Less Car’ backpack covers!

Keep your stuff dry, increase your visibility on the road and identify yourself as a CAN member with one of these waterproof, incredibly loud yellow backpack covers. Reflective strip, the CAN web address and ‘One Less Car’ in big friendly letters on the back-remind those car drivers why they should love you.

One size only: now available to CAN members for \$25, and to non-members for \$35. To order, send your cheque to: CAN, PO Box 6491, Auckland, with your name, address and contact phone or email.



NOTICES AND EVENTS

Cycling Advocates' Network, Annual General Meeting - Agenda

Saturday 18 November 2006, 5:00 p.m.

Turnbull House, Wellington

1. Attendance & apologies

2. Minutes of 2005 AGM

3. Matters arising

4. Officeholders' reports:

- (a) Chairperson
- (b) Treasurer
 - audited accounts for 2005
 - auditor's appointment and remuneration
 - accounts to date for 2006
 - 2007 budget

5. Election of Executive:

Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

3-5 other Executive positions

6. Notices of motion:

- (a) Honoraria

(i) "Before each AGM, the chair of CAN writes to all Exec members and office holders (incl. Chainlinks newsletter, web master etc.) to thank them for their work over the year. They are offered their choice of a \$50 gift voucher (subject to the CAN Exec ensuring that the finances are adequate) from:

- Sounds music vouchers
- Dick Smith Electronics
- Body Shop
- Ground Effect
- CAN merchandise

...which they can choose to take up or not, by responding by a certain date." (proposed: Bevan Woodward)

7. Any other business

- (a) CAN Policy statement (draft revision to be circulated for discussion and ratification)

CAN Do and Tenth Birthday Celebrations

Wellington, 18/19 November 2006

The annual CAN Do, CAN's national planning and training workshop, will be held in Wellington on the weekend of 18 and 19 November. This is a chance for CANNers to help plan the future of the CAN, to learn, to gossip, to ride bikes and to generally have a good time.

It's also a chance to celebrate CAN's tenth anniversary and all we've achieved in the last decade. There's sure to be a party.

The weekend will include the Cycle-Friendly Awards ceremony at Parliament and our AGM. Other activities include rides, social events, a planning session, opportunities for groups to share successes and problems, and training in advocacy or technical matters.

We'd like to hear from you about what you think should be included. Get in touch with Simon Kennett, simon.kennett@can.org.nz, 04-499 4967, 027-449 1844; or Fiona Whero, fiona.whoero@can.org.nz, 03-366-2645, 027 449 1845.

There will be extra financial assistance available through the CAN Networking Project as well as CAN's regular subsidies to help members with travel and accommodation costs.

This is going to be a great weekend - put the dates in your diary now.



Environmental issues that matter to you.

The Ministry for the Environment would like to meet with you, your community and your councils to talk about environmental issues important to you, including:

- adapting to the impacts of climate change and progress on flood risk management
- national environmental standards for the environment and infrastructure
- progress on water and waste
- effective environmental reporting.

The Talk Environment Roadshow will be visiting 17 locations around New Zealand between 27 October – 10 November 2006. You are invited to attend a meeting at a location near you.

Meeting Locations:

Auckland City, Blenheim, Christchurch, Dunedin, Gisborne, Greymouth, Hamilton, Invercargill, Napier, Nelson, New Plymouth, North Shore, Palmerston North, Queenstown, Tauranga, Wellington and Whangarei.

For details on meeting dates, times and locations, further information on topics, and to register to attend a public meeting, please visit our website: www.mfe.govt.nz/talkenvironment/ or by calling freephone 0800 TALKENV (0800 825 536). Please register early, as places are limited.

LETTERS TO CHAINLINKS

I would like to respond to Peter King's letter in the last ChainLinks berating the editor for her dream of having all car parks turned into bike stands. Good on Peter for expressing his view but I disagree. I loved the picture of the car shaped bike stand. I also think that enabling people to grasp the concept (dream) of having significantly fewer cars on the roads is one of the most important roles CAN has. We are so addicted to the private motor car in NZ we can't imagine life without them. Many societies function very well with the majority of people using public transport, cycling and walking rather than private cars, and they're not impoverished backwaters, they're great places to live. Keep us dreaming of a society with less cars, and keep up the cool pictures and good humour – the issues are often big and difficult and it's good to have a bit of a laugh now and then.

Steven Muir



Putting cycling and cyclists in the right perspective

I read Peter King's comments on ChainLinks issue Jul-Aug 2006 and thought I would like to express my personal opinion on the points / issues he has raised.

I don't see anything offensive about the picture in the May-Jun issue of ChainLinks. As a cyclist, I see it more as humour. In fact, I don't see how this can lead New Zealand to become an impoverished state like Albania. In fact, exactly the opposite is likely to take place. A good example is London. When Ken Livingstone came with his proposals to cut down the number of cars coming to the CBD and get more people into cycling, the media painted a picture of all doom and gloom. They tried to create an impression that reducing the number of cars would make London less liveable and the city would lose its charm. Well, since Ken introduced congestion charges, Londoners have taken to cycling in a big way and this is growing at the rate of 50% a year. Far from any doom and gloom, London is more liveable now and the economy has not slowed down. In fact, after the terrorist attacks on London's underground, the whole public transport network came to a halt, cars could not move due to traffic blockages and diversions. Suddenly, all cycle stores found their stocks disappearing as Londoners found cycling was the only way they could get back home. Only 4% of all kiwis cycle to work. Compare this to more than 10% that many European cities have and still have a better economic growth rate compared to New Zealand.

I do agree with some of Peter's comments, i.e. Drop our negative approach on cycling issues but be positive as well as the need to build partnerships with other agencies to promote cycling. However, I disagree with some of his observations.

Although cycling does require a certain level of fitness, it has also been found to help bring about that level of fitness. While I took 40 minutes to cover a 2 km uphill climb in my first attempt, I can now do twice that distance in half the time. I find myself more energetic and alert than I was before cycling – a fact Peter will agree with, since he is himself a cyclist. A colleague of mine at my previous work place is much smaller than me, but has a much better cycling capacity and can easily beat me in any race.

Cycling and asthma – While I sympathise with asthmatics, I doubt they should not cycle. Ok, let me throw fictions out and bring in facts. I will draw your attention to the British Medical Association's publication "Cycling towards health and safety" (1992). The study found that since breathing exercises have always been recommended and have helped asthmatic and bronchitis patients for a long time, "Moderately vigorous cycling is therefore a suitable way of doing this". Still not convinced? My colleague claims he gets significantly fewer asthma attacks since he started cycling to work more than two years ago. So, here is something they can try – it is still a choice.

Cycling and obesity – The same journal is dedicated to cycling's benefits in improving health and explains how, far from killing them, obese people will benefit a lot from cycling. Obese people who exercise regularly have been found to have a risk of heart attack no greater than normal exercisers, whereas sedentary obese people have five times the risk.

Yes, there are some cyclists with bad behaviour on the road, but they are a small minority, similar to the small minority of motorists. I have found the majority of motorists and cyclists to be law abiding.

Sridhar Ekambaram

P.S. Although I am one of the executive members of CAN, the views expressed above are purely personal.



Flying with Bikes

We recently flew to Sydney using Jetstar and were charged \$350 for overweight. Yes, we had a fair amount of stuff, but most of the weight was in our bikes, one trailer and the packaging. Some cyclists might be happy to throw their bikes in a bag or box and hope for the best, but we, and no doubt many other cyclists, would be devastated if our bikes arrived damaged. We have seen the result in the form of a friend's bike, which was beyond repair.

We have since found out that Virgin Blue (and any of their subsidiaries) only count a bike (or other sporting article) as 5kg, no matter how heavy it is. This leaves you with 15 kg for other gear, which should be plenty. So FLY VIRGIN BLUE if you are travelling with your bike. (And don't abuse the system by filling your bike box up with other stuff!)

We are looking forward to our first flight with Virgin Blue in a few weeks time and will let you know if it fails our expectations.

Lyneke Onderwater, writing from Mackay, Australia



SHARE THE ROAD, SAY CYCLING GROUPS

Cyclists are asking motorists and cyclists to better share the road after a spate of cyclist deaths and injury crashes.

National cycling organisation BikeNZ today called for nationwide campaigns to educate motorists and cyclists on how to co-exist safely on the road.

BikeNZ Chief Executive Rodger Thompson said "These recent crashes don't tell us that cycling is necessarily unsafe, but they do show an urgent need for changes in driver and cyclist behaviour."

BikeNZ's member organisations also want to see action. Mark Ireland, President of road and track body Cycling NZ, said, "I am very concerned with the current behaviour of some of the general public and motorists towards cyclists and with daylight saving having arrived, there are many more cyclists out on the road and greater potential for unpleasant incidents."

Recent incidents involving competitive cyclists have included a bunch of riders in Te Awamutu being hit from behind, and Tauranga cyclists being threatened with a baseball bat and assaulted.

The chairperson of the Cycling Advocates' Network (CAN), Robert Ibell, said, that very few motorists actually deliberately set out to harm cyclists. "Many motorists are unsure about how they should behave around cyclists. CAN is concerned that driver training and licensing doesn't deal with this."

"Motorists and cyclists both need to use the roads wisely and safely, but motor vehicles pose a much greater risk. That means that motorists have an extra duty of care," said Mr Ibell.

With increasing numbers of commuter, recreational and competitive cyclists, BikeNZ is calling for the Government to fund and co-ordinate a nationwide Share the Road campaign, including television advertising. It also wants to see all New Zealand children receiving cycling skills training at school.

"We welcome a Land Transport New Zealand initiative to pilot a best practice training course and look to the Government to fund its rollout around the country," said Rodger Thompson.

BikeNZ has committed itself to help educate its members and other cyclists. It will also be talking to Government agencies, the AA and the Road Transport Forum about ways to get messages to motorists.

According to BikeNZ, Transit NZ and local authorities have an important part to play by ensuring there's enough space for both cyclists and motorists, and by educating road users.

BikeNZ has some simple tips for motorists and cyclists. Some of the most important are:

Cyclists

- work on your cycling skills
- know the road rules and follow them
- ride predictably, in as smooth a line as possible
- signal your intended moves in traffic
- ride at least a metre out from parked cars
- occupy the lane where your safety requires it
- wear easily visible clothing and use lights at night
- ride in single file where riding two abreast creates an obstruction

Motorists

- indicate turns and avoid overtaking a cyclist just before turning
- leave at least 1.5 metres between you and a cyclist when overtaking
- if there's no room to overtake a cyclist safely, wait
- slow down and give cyclists a wide berth when overtaking on the open road
- check behind you before opening car doors (both sides)
- keep your speed down when visibility is bad (such as when sun is in your eyes) or there are lots of cyclists and pedestrians around
- know where your blind spots are, especially in trucks, vans or buses

Media Release, BikeNZ, 5 October 2006



\$28 MILLION PLAN TO PROMOTE HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES IN SCHOOLS

Promoting healthy eating and encouraging Kiwi kids to become more active is the focus of a new action plan for schools and early childhood education services, says Education Minister Steve Maharey.

The plan is part of Mission-On, a new \$67 million government-wide campaign that aims to tackle obesity by improving nutrition and reversing declining levels of physical activity among young Kiwis.

"The government will invest \$28 million in major new initiatives that support schools and early childhood services to promote healthy eating, and teach skills and attitudes that encourage kids to be active throughout their lives," Steve Maharey said.

"As Kiwis, we often portray ourselves as sports-loving and active. It's of huge concern that New Zealand children are following a global trend in declining levels of physical activity and increasing obesity from a very young age. Poor nutrition is associated with lower academic achievement and poor school attendance.

"Schools and early childhood services, along with parents and communities, have an important role in ensuring children gain the skills and habits they need for a healthy life. While many schools and early childhood services have already made major changes, more needs to be done and the wider community also need to be engaged and take responsibility."

Initiatives specific to schools and early childhood services will include:

- Changes to the National Administration Guidelines, requiring school boards to develop policies that promote and achieve healthy nutrition, and reduce the consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks
- New guidelines to help schools provide healthy food options, including a food and drink classification system
- A regional nutrition fund available to schools, which will support the implementation of guidelines (this initiative is part of an agreement with the Green Party)
- A social marketing campaign, including a toolkit for schools to use, national and local advertising and research on the effectiveness of the campaign
- Professional development support for teachers to strengthen and improve the teaching of food and nutrition education
- Work to reduce consumption of unhealthy foods within early childhood services
- A programme of high-profile events to encourage students to get involved in learning about nutrition.

In addition to initiatives announced today, the government has several existing programmes in place to enhance physical activity in schools.

Press Release, Minister for Education, 21 September 2006



NEW CAN REP FOR BIKENZ BOARD

Bevan Woodward has resigned as the CAN representative on the board of BikeNZ due to work commitments. His place will be taken by Axel Wilke.

In his two years on the board Bevan did a great job of representing CAN's interests and participating generally in the governance and running of BikeNZ. Many thanks, Bevan for all your hard work on behalf of CAN!

Axel is a member of the CAN Executive and one of its Technical Advisors. Axel's contact details are:

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03-366 9493 (h)

027-292 9810 (mob)

Fax: 03 343 8228 (w)

E-mail axel.wilke@can.org.nz

Thanks to Axel for taking on the role.



PRESENTATION BY OVERSEAS ROAD SAFETY EXPERTS

Duxton Hotel, Wellington, was the venue for a short presentation by overseas road safety experts, organized by TRAFINZ (the Local Authority Traffic Institute) of which Wellington City Council is a member. The visitors had been the keynote speakers at the TRAFINZ conference in Queenstown a few days before, the theme of which was Transport Sustainability.

Presentations were made by:

Jorg Beckmann - Executive Director of European Transport Safety Council,

Kate McMahon - Head of Road Safety Strategy Division, UK,

Anders Lie - Head of Road Safety Strategy, Swedish Road Administration and

Prof Ian Johnston – Director, Monash University of Accident Research Centre.

It was interesting to note how, despite the theme of transport sustainability, all speakers except one focussed solely on road safety.

Jorg Beckmann mentioned several interesting European initiatives:

- European Environment Agency monitoring of transport performance (see http://themes.eea.europa.eu/Sectors_and_activities/transport)
- European Transport Safety Council's (ESTC) Road Safety Performance Index (see <http://www.etsc.be/PIN.php>)

- The ESTC's 'Vulnerable road user Organisations In Cooperation across Europe' (VOICE) Europe-wide campaign to protect vulnerable road users (see <http://www.etsc.be/Voice.php>) - one of their initiatives is an award for motor vehicle manufacturers who design to protect pedestrians

There is a big variance in road safety performance between high achievers like UK, Germany, France and low-achievers like Latvian countries. New Zealand fits into the middle category along with countries like Spain and Italy.

Anders Lie showed how Sweden had appalling crash statistics till the 70s, after which they adopted a "Vision Zero" approach. The idea was to aim for zero crashes and fatalities. Although the magical figure is yet to be achieved, there has been a steady reduction. The root of success is a combination of changes to road codes and (equally important) changes in driver culture. From a society that was highly tolerant of fatalities, the Swedes are now totally intolerant of bad drivers.

According to Anders, there is no use aiming at just a reduction in road toll by say 10% or even 50%, because the other 90% or 50% give room for complacency. Vision Zero is:

- A vision for many stakeholders
- An ethical platform
- A shared responsibility
- A safety philosophy
- A driving force for change

Kate McMahon said the British have been more successful in bringing down casualty rates among school children by adopting practical school travel plans. They have gone a step further and offer a carrot and stick policy to bad drivers. Bad drivers are kept off the road and given incentives to become good drivers. Good drivers are in turn rewarded. They are also getting the minimum driving age increased from 15 to 18. (You might have seen Kate McMahon interviewed by Susan Wood on Friday August 11th, recommending increasing the minimum driving age and being rejected by Harry Duynhoven.)

Interesting initiatives Kate mentioned include:

- Department for Education & Skills - "Travelling to school: an action plan" (see www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_susttravel/documents/page/dft_usttravel_024011.pdf) and "Travelling to school: a good practice guide" (see www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_susttravel/documents/page/dft_usttravel_023992.pdf)

- Department for Transport - Gloucester Safer City pilot project (see www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_504563-11.hcsp): "The systematic application of an urban safety management strategy has reaped benefits in casualty reductions."
- Department for Transport - mixed priority routes: the DoT is working with 10 Local Highway Authorities to see how main urban roads can be made safer and more pleasant for all road users without causing major traffic disruption
- Department for Transport - Birmingham Inner City Demonstration Project: builds on the Gloucester project.
- Department for Transport - Dealing with Disadvantage / Neighbourhood Road Safety Initiative

Prof Ian Johnston was critical of driver attitudes, especially of people with those big gas-guzzling cars capable of making speeds in excess of 100 mph. He questioned why car speedometers needed to go to 200kph+. He mentioned the generally accepted view that a 5% drop in speed results in a 10% drop in fatalities.

According to him, safety is being traded for reducing journey times (which Anders Lie confirmed is not allowed in Sweden). What he showed was that a 5% reduction in speed did not have a significant increase in journey times and yet resulted in a significant reduction in fatalities. The number of stops, not speed, determines urban journey times. Prof Johnston quoted several studies, including one by the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (Australia) in which motorists driving aggressively as close to the speed limit as possible saved 5 minutes over a 60km journey but used 30% more fuel than motorists taking a laid back approach.

He talked about car fleet owners who had introduced 'eco-driving' policies (financial rewards for lower fuel usage) which had led to substantially reduced fuel costs and (unexpectedly) to lower insurance bills. He suggested that fleet owners should ensure that the cars they bought had speedometers with lower maximum speeds shown and/or with speed limiters installed. Government agencies also needed to be fussy about the types of cars offered by hire car companies (e.g. no SUVs).

Throughout the 2 hr session (that included lunch), there was a significant emphasis on driver attitudes and enforcement of laws, meaning you need two hands to clap. People have to accept responsibility for their actions and the community has to also accept responsibility for letting bad drivers on the road. At the same time, you can have any number of laws, but they are of no use without significant police presence and law enforcement on the road.

One of the ideas floated in the presentation was to start off a nation-wide debate and get people involved in the necessary change. I think this is important and our forum can give it a head start.

On the sidelines of the presentation, I had a chance to talk to Jorg Beckmann and introduce myself as a cyclist and a cycling advocate. Jorg was of the opinion that Wellington was a very cycle-friendly place and seems to have more cyclists than anywhere else he had observed in New Zealand.

Sridhar Ekambaram, CAN Exec Member



**Are you keen to see more people cycling more often
in New Zealand?**

Advocacy Manager Role – Applications Sought



BikeNZ is currently recruiting to the position of Advocacy Manager.

This key role will carry out BikeNZ's lobbying function and work with cycling advocates, local government and central government agencies throughout the country to promote cycling as an everyday way to travel. You will need excellent written and oral communication skills, be self-motivated, and have media liaison experience and good business management skills.

You'll also need strong strategic planning skills and vision to deal with national transport issues as they relate to cycling, as well as an ability to work on a diverse range of practical cycling issues. A clear understanding of the relationship between the health, education, environment, economic and transport sectors would also be useful.

The Advocacy Manager will help develop BikeNZ's overall role and work on the integration between day-to-day, recreational and competitive cycling.

For a copy of the Job Description or to submit an application, email BikeNZ Operations Manager, Mike Byrne, at mike.byrne@bikenz.org.nz



HOT OFF THE PRESS...

What does a modern Arab Emir do when he sees his people growing fat and their diabetes figures climbing? He builds them a 35km bicycle track so they can get into the saddle and recover that lean and healthy look Omar Sharif once made famous.

But what if his sheikdom is a desert with 50-degree centigrade temperatures so blazing hot you break into a sweat changing TV channels and nobody in his right mind leaves the cool shade?

He air-conditions the cycle path and puts up a canopy to keep the sun off. Doesn't everyone? By the end of 2007 the world's first a/c bike path will be a reality in Qatar, a peninsula on the western shore of the Persian Gulf, says Dr Adnan Rahman, a consultant with Rand Europe, an independent think-tank based in bicycle-rich Holland.

Qatar is all sand on top of more gas and oil than practically anywhere. Officially, temperatures never rise above 50 degrees: at that point, by law, it becomes too hot to work, and that's unproductive. But the plan is to make cycling possible any time along the bike route.

It will be between 5 and 7 metres wide, made of a new type of low-density tar designed to cope with the high heat, probably coloured white and open to all types of bicycles and in-line skating and rollerblading. "Its primary function is recreation," Rahman explained at a workshop during the Velo Mondial 2006 congress in Cape Town. "The decision to do the project was based on health."

Cold water from deep under the sand will be fed through a cooling surface. Tiny solar cells virtually painted onto the canopy roof provide power. Qatar is a conservative Arab country but the Emir's one of the region's most enlightened heads of state. And in a country where women did not drive cars until fairly recently, there's no ban on them cycling. "We did consult religious leaders."

Other practical and cultural issues emerged. "Arab robes aren't suitable for cycling," Rahman said. "They get caught in the chains and the gears. And the rider's position on a bike wasn't modest; you can see the other guy's backside." So the consultants approached universities and design schools to come up with acceptable cycle clothing and a new shape of bike that would not be offensive.

The path links the old town with the new city centre of Doha, the capital, and flows along the Persian Gulf coastline, touching museums and restaurants, art galleries and shopping centres. It's a cycle-safe scenic route; under- and over-passes avoid any contact with motorized traffic. What will it cost? Qatar ranks up there among the very rich Arab nations and financing won't come at the cost of affordable housing for the poor. Dr Rahman didn't have the final figures but said "about 25% per kilometer of the cost of building a kilometer of highway."

The Emir wants this to be a work of art, a showcase for his country to draw visitors and athletes, as well as portly Qataris.

CYCLING NEWS FROM AROUND NEW ZEALAND

Cyclist's death under bus third calamity for riders

A cyclist's death under the wheels of a tourist bus yesterday was the third horror crash involving a cyclist in a week.

It is thought the man collided with the front of the southbound bus before ending up behind the vehicle near the middle of State Highway 1 in the Waikato.

His mangled bike stayed wedged beneath the bus. Police say there is no suggestion the bus driver was at fault in the accident, which happened about 2km south of Taupiri at Hopuhopu shortly before 11am.

"It appears as if the cyclist was heading south, and he may have somehow veered into the path of the bus," said Sergeant Marc Hepworth of the police highway patrol.

Good quality equipment and clothing indicated the man was a serious cyclist who was probably on a training ride.

The bus had 31 Korean tourists on board, including children. None was hurt though a number were shaken and upset. But the man's death comes amid growing anger from cyclists who say they are frequently targeted or put in dangerous situations by careless motorists.

On Monday night a 52-year-old almost had his leg severed in a collision with a 4WD at Gulf Harbour, north of Auckland.

And a 17-year-old was left paralysed from the chest down after he was forced from the road in west Auckland last week.

Police are still hunting for the driver of the vehicle.

Other cyclists angered by the driver's apparently deliberate attempt to force the cyclist off the road say they are regularly struck with objects and "buzzed" by motorists.

Police are investigating a complaint from competitive cyclists Brian Biggs, Simon Wilder and Gordon McCauley, a Commonwealth Games bronze medallist, over an alleged road rage incident in Kumeu last week.

The cyclists say that after an argument the driver rammed into Mr McCauley's bike, causing \$1000 worth of damage, then got out of his vehicle and "started pushing us around".

Mr Biggs said: "We get it all the time. I was out riding about six weeks ago through Remuera and someone drove past and threw an empty bottle of Heineken at me."

On another ride, Mr Biggs said, someone leaned from a vehicle and whacked him with a rolled-up newspaper.

Advocacy group Cycle Action Auckland said cyclists were often intimidated by motorists, who seemed to resent sharing the road.

NZ Herald, 27 September 2006



Council prioritises moves to reduce speeds near city schools

Auckland City says it's backing a new process for prioritising 40km/h speed zones for schools with highest risk of road-related crashes.

A speed zone trial at St Josephs School in Onehunga started in May and has already shown a significant reduction in motorists' speeds during busy times before and after school.

Council's transport and urban linkages committee says it now supports extending travel plans to enable more schools to participate.

School travel plans are part of the council's overarching strategy to create more travel choices and make it safer and fun for students to walk or cycle, or catch the train or bus to school.

The council is also launching a Bike Better safety programme in intermediate schools.

Transport and urban linkages committee chairman, Richard Simpson, says the road safety initiatives play an important role in encouraging sustainable travel to and from school.

"Trends for school travel are clearly untenable," says Mr Simpson.

"Of the city's 76,000 school children, 54 per cent arrive at school by car each morning. We're determined to get more children walking and cycling safely to school."

Mr Simpson says the council has already achieved success introducing walking school buses, with more than 1800 children participating.

"I'd like to thank all school staff, parents and students working towards making their school a walking and cycling school."

The Times Online, 27 September 2006



Christchurch lawyer tackles Le Tour stages

Christchurch lawyer Ken Lord has just had the adventure of a lifetime – cycling five stages of Le Tour de France. He was not among the field of riders contesting Le Tour, however, although he did ride the stages on the same day.

A partner of Parry Field Lawyers in Christchurch, Ken joined one of three packages offered to cycling enthusiasts by Kiwis at Le Tour.

This saw him tackle the steep winding five stages in the Pyrenees. Each morning, the group would set out from their hotel to ride the stage, making sure they finished in good time to get a spot on the road to watch the crème de la crème of world cycling race past.

"A million people come out every day to watch this event. Le Tour de France is the second biggest sporting event in the world.

"It was just unbelievable to be part of all the action – to be cheered on by thousands of people lining the route and keen to see some cyclists in action.

"We had a tremendous time, cycling the stages before the tour and then stationing ourselves two feet from the peloton when it comes through.

"Those guys are just unbelievable. It was fabulous to get that close. You can see the passion in their eyes," Ken said on his return.

Even after the tour has swept through, the cyclists "reign supreme", with some 8,000 on the road one day. And they get to leave first. The cars simply have to wait.

"It was unforgettable," Ken says. "It was just a fabulous time. I'd love to go back and do the Alps next year." (Kiwis at Le Tour offers three packages: the Pyrenees, the French Alps and the Champagne Tour.)

"It's just great to have these things, because they absolutely spark you into a different lifestyle," he said.

Ken first started cycling about six years ago, taking up the activity to enhance his general fitness. Then came competitive riding. "It's mainly general fitness, but I like to race. I race to give an edge to my training."

Most Saturdays will see Ken competing and he plans to enter the national road championships in October. At last year's event, he was about half way through his age group field in the time trial and is feeling "reasonably confident" about his target for this year's event.

"It even helps me with my work," he said. "It's staggering how you need to be mentally alert when you're cycling. And once you've done this, I think you attack problems in the same way. You attack them with a mental toughness."

Cycling, both as a way to improve health and fitness and as a competitive sport, "is on a huge increase", Ken said. "In fact, there's a 76-year-old who races. It's a great sport for keeping going."

A specialist in charities, trusts and asset planning, Ken is convener of the NZLS Property Law Section's Trusts & Wills Technical Committee.

LawTalk



A NATION EMBRACING CYCLING

BikeNZ has launched a new Strategic Plan (2007-2010) that will guide its work towards achieving the Vision of 'A Nation Embracing Cycling'.

Following a successful 3-year business start-up phase involving partnership building, recruiting a team of 18 professional staff, and building a commercial platform to fund operations, BikeNZ is now focusing on achieving 5 strategic objectives by 2010:

1. Developing cyclists who have the ability to succeed in key international events.
2. Increasing participation in all forms of cycling – competitive, recreational and commuter (everyday).
3. Creating high public awareness about cycling underpinned by a strong and positive media profile.
4. BikeNZ to be recognised as having best practice governance and management at every level of its operations.
5. Generating sufficient resources (people, finances, equipment and facilities) to develop and grow cycling at all levels.

“Our mission is to service our six Member Organisations and develop cycling at all levels,” said BikeNZ Chairman, Arthur Klap. “We have now entered an important period of consolidation where we must ensure our services and programmes are truly world class. Over the next 24 months, BikeNZ will begin working in the area of regional development in supporting the regional organisations and clubs of our Member Organisations”.

Klap went on to say, “With cycling being prioritised within SPARC’s new 6-year High Performance Strategy to London 2012, there are performance targets we must meet. Expanding our BikeNZ Europe-driven programmes [based out of Limoux, southern France] will be key to our future success, not only at Beijing [2008 Olympics] but also at the 2012 London Olympics”.

BikeNZ will lead the delivery of this integrated Strategic Plan, which represents the sporting, recreational and advocacy growth development targets of the following Member Organisations:

- BMX NZ
- Cycling NZ
- Mountain Bike NZ
- NZ Schools Cycling Association
- NZ Masters Cycling Association
- CAN

Bike NZ Press Release, 20 September 2006

FULL OF FINE IDEAS BUT NO COMMITMENT

Last week, kayakers took their craft to Tuam Street to protest against the Central Plains Water scheme. The next day, the friends of the Edgeware pool were on the march again to protest against the Christchurch City Council's decision to close their neighbourhood swimming spot. Which recreational group will be the next to vent its concerns to the council? Odds on it will be the city's cycling community, which has looked on with dismay at what appears to be glorious inaction on the part of the council over cycleways. Councillors are due to hold a seminar next week over the issue, with controversial Riccarton Road to the fore, and they should meet with a sense of *deja vu*. About this time last year, the council held a seminar on cycleways. This followed the abrupt decision in June last year - made without considered staff advice - to slap a moratorium on new cycleways. One seminar, a workshop and three formal council meetings later, and after some none-too-subtle prompting from staff about the potential legal and financial implications, the moratorium was lifted in November.

At the time, Mayor Garry Moore complained that if the ban on new cycleways remained, the city would be cast into disrepute. When it was removed, he said cycleways had become a heightened council priority.

The problem is that in the months since there has been no evidence of this new priority, leading to the suspicion that a back-door moratorium has persisted in the first New Zealand city to have introduced a cycling strategy. In the greater scheme of things, this might seem to be a minor issue, but it does raise some questions about decision-making that should concern ratepayers. The council meetings and seminars that dealt with the issue late last year had a common theme. Councillors would turn up armed with concerns about the safety of particular cycleways or cycleways in general and about the fact that the number of children cycling to school was not rising. Staff would generally turn up armed with point-by-point rebuttals of the councillors' arguments and with what seemed compelling legal reasons for the moratorium to be lifted, including the conflict with the council's own cycle strategy.

Even when councillors realised that they had no choice but to lift the moratorium, this decision came with a request for further information on 24 points raised in a previous workshop. The staff duly reported on these points, noting that virtually all the concerns raised around the council table could be dealt with without needing to change the cycle strategy. Typical of this saga, the report included some pointed criticism of councillors' arguments. For example, the question "Is it safe to provide cycle lanes?" was turned on its head to become "Is it safe to not provide cycle lanes?" When this report went before the council on February 2, it was promptly kicked to the touchline of non-decision-making portfolio

councillors for yet more consideration. Now councillors are clearly extremely nervous about cycling issues, no doubt due to concern that they would be blamed whenever serious injury or a fatality occurred on a council cycleway. No-one would suggest that councillors should automatically accept staff advice on this or any issue without the ability to ask for further reports. Behind the scenes, a marketing report on strategy has been done, as has planning work on Riccarton Road, which is at the cutting edge of the debate over cycleways. This issue has now been dragging on for more than 14 months since the moratorium was imposed, and surely it is time that firm political decisions were made to give certainty to the public over council policy and allow staff to plan with confidence.

According to the council, its seminar next week will have a "new emphasis of direction". Any emphasis and any direction would be desirable. Because these seminars do not have decision-making powers, it is a fair bet that any progress on key cycleways such as Riccarton Road will be far from immediate. Cycling is but one of several issues where the council needs to show progress has been made. This time next year, the local body election campaign will be into full swing. Early indications are that after the famine of major issues in 2004, the next contest will be a veritable feast. The council needs to provide closure or at least solid progress on a raft of matters, including long-running issues such as two-laning Lichfield Street, the City Mall, kerbside organic recycling, Lyttelton Port's future, the Urban Development Strategy, traffic congestion and, most recently, the sure-to-be-controversial revamp of Hagley Park.

All too often, fine ideas are launched in these areas but appear to stall. Which is why councillors must be prepared to tackle the tough decisions to back up their theoretical commitment to cycling. If they cannot, is this - like the Edgeware pool - an issue that might be championed by Christchurch Central MP Tim Barnett, about whom rumours of a foray into local politics have been swirling for months? Put another way, was it a coincidence that this year Barnett hopped on a bike and rode in Le Race to Akaroa?

The Press, 23 August 2006



OVERSEAS CYCLING NEWS

Waterway to get to Work, by Bike

Canal tow paths were never built for speed. They were designed for horses to trudge along, lugging barges and their non-urgent loads. More recently they have become the favourite haunt of people enjoying gentle pursuits such as walking, fishing and boating. But they have now become the favourite route of new users who are in much more of a hurry - cyclists. British Waterways reports a notable increase in bike journeys on towpaths,

partly because of improvement works, through a lottery-funded project, to create a nationwide network of cycle lanes. But traditional canal users are not happy. They complain that towpaths have become "cycle superhighways". They are being pushed off these narrow paths, they say, by the sheer volume of cyclists in a tearing hurry to get to and from work. In short, towpaths have become the new front line in the battle between pedestrians and cyclists. And, at the moment, it is the cyclists who are winning.

The Guardian, September 2006



Court ruling 'threatens cycling boom'

A court ruling which could threaten the government's sustainable transport strategy by "criminalising" cyclists who refuse to use cycle lanes has been condemned by transport groups.

Daniel Cadden, 25, was found guilty earlier this month of "inconsiderate cycling" for riding on the road rather than a cycle path in what campaigners believe is the first case of its kind.

They fear that if the ruling sets a precedent it could undermine the recent renaissance in commuter cycling in Britain. A spokeswoman for Transport 2000, which campaigns for better public transport, warned: "If this ruling becomes commonplace, it could put the recent boom in cycling at real risk."

Mr Cadden is appealing against the magistrate's decision, which also saw him fined £100 and forced to pay £200 costs.

He was pulled over by police last September on the B5072 in Telford and accused of holding up motor traffic by not using cycling facilities.

A segregated cycle path runs alongside the other side of the road.

Mr Cadden claimed he was travelling at more than 20mph and that motor vehicles were breaking the law by overtaking him across double white lines.

District judge Bruce Morgan rejected his argument about the poor state and dangers of the cycle path, and found him guilty of breaching the 1988 Road Traffic Act.

Campaigners fear that if the ruling is used against other cyclists, it could deter current and would-be riders from taking to the saddle.

Today the campaigns director for the Cyclists Touring Club, Roger Geffen, warned that the ruling came at a particularly significant moment for cycling commuters, as the Highway Code is being updated.

He said: "The Department [for] Transport received complaints from 11,000 cyclists this year when their draft consultation of the new Highway Code came out, which had added a clause saying that cyclists should use 'cycle facilities where practicable'.

"That has now gone back for reconsideration with a final draft expected next year. Meanwhile, this case could be crucial, because the Highway Code can be quoted in criminal and civil cases.

"The government's current national standards for cycling allow for riding on the carriageway and now a cyclist has been criminalised for doing just that.

"The government is keen to encourage more people to cycle more often for health, the environment and congestion. If this judgement becomes the norm our worst fears could be realised."

A spokeswoman for the Department for Transport refused to comment on the individual case of Mr Cadden but insisted that ministers had "no plans to make the use of cycle facilities mandatory".

In 1996, the Conservative government published the first-ever National Cycling Strategy, under transport minister Stephen Norris, which promised to double cycling by 2002 and redouble that by 2012. Neither of these were met.

When Labour came to power a 1998 transport white paper led to a 10-year transport plan in 2000, which set a target of trebling cycling by 2010. That target was then dropped in 2004.

Cycle use in London has risen 72% in five years in London, approaching the level of some continental countries, although various figures suggest it has fallen back across England as a whole.

The CTC has launched a legal fund to aid Mr Cadden's appeal against the judgement. The chair of the Cyclists Defence Fund, Colin Langdon, said: "This is an extremely regrettable judgement and I fully expect it to be contestable. Daniel Cadden clearly needs to take legal advice about the options open to him.

"However, this is exactly the sort of case for which the fund is always in need of donations, so that we can defend the rights of cyclists as road users and more generally to raise awareness of cyclists' position in law."

The magistrate involved, district judge Bruce Morgan, hit the headlines last year when he acquitted a police driver of dangerous driving and speeding who reached 154mph without sirens or flashing lights, accepting his argument that he was "honing" his driving skills.

A retrial in that case has been ordered after a high court appeal.

The Guardian, August 19 2006

Bike lanes prevent over-correction by drivers, bicyclists, reducing danger even on narrow roads

By studying the interactions of drivers and bicyclists on Texas roads, transportation engineers at The University of Texas at Austin have discovered that having painted bike lanes on streets and roads helps both commuters stay in safer, more central positions in their respective lanes.

“Without a marked bike lane, there appears to be a lot of uncertainty about how much space each person needs -- even when adequate road space is provided,” said Randy Machemehl, the Nasser I. Al-Rashid Centennial Professor in Transportation Engineering and director of the university’s Center for Transportation Research (CTR), where the study was conducted.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) provided \$114,000 for the study conducted on two- and four-lane roadways where bike lanes had been added. The results are posted at the CTR’s Web site at: www.utexas.edu/research/ctr/pdf_reports/0_5157_1.pdf.

Cities such as Austin and San Antonio where the study was conducted are considering how to increase bicycle lanes as part of meeting federal requirements of the Clean Air Act. Before the study, little was known about the best approach for adding bike lanes to existing roadways for commuter comfort.

TxDOT follows recommendations from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials to have five-foot-wide bike lanes. However, existing roadways can be too narrow to retrofit that way.

By studying videos of thousands of passing events involving 31 paid, volunteer cyclists, and combining that with data from other studies, CTR researchers determined the best approach for narrower, retrofitted roadways.

Often, four-lane roadways provide 24 feet for traffic moving in one direction. The surface could be re-striped to provide a 10-foot-wide motorists’ lane and a 14-foot-wide, outside lane that is unmarked for shared use. Or the outside lane could be marked to clearly show bicyclists have the outer four feet.

Ian Hallett, a CTR graduate research assistant, and David Luskin, a former CTR research scientist, found that cyclists on a road that provided an unmarked, four-foot lane tended to hug the curb dangerously close. Safer cyclist behavior occurred with a striped lane the same width.

Motorists in the outside, 10-foot-wide lane generally behaved similarly. Without a marked bike lane, they veered away from bicyclists, crossing into the next motorist lane nearly nine out of 10 times.

Often, they veered so far in an apparent effort to avoid a collision that they swerved a full four feet into the next motorists' lane.

"You could put a whole car between the bicyclist and them," said Hallett, an avid bicyclist who's logged thousands of miles in Austin.

With a striped bike lane, six of 10 motorists swerved, but those who swerved only encroached about 40 percent as far.

To ensure that the study findings would be broadly applicable, the CTR engineers chose volunteer cyclists of different ages, gender and cycling experience to observe during more than 8,000 passing events. The videotaping occurred in 2005 between February and March.

Taking advantage of Luskin's statistical expertise, the pair then combined the behavioral information from the 120 hours of video with results from a national study of a similar mix of cyclists. That 1998 study for the Federal Highway Administration involved asking hundreds of cyclists how safe they would feel in various road situations shown on film.

"We went out in the field and actually observed what cyclists do out there, and what the situation was for motorists as well to expand on others' work," Luskin said.

The researchers have provided the study's combined results on computer software to inform transportation officials' decisions about bikeway changes.

Previous studies had suggested other benefits of marked bicycle lanes. Some had shown that bicyclists stop at intersections more often and obey general traffic rules better when roadways are marked to include them.

Bicyclists are also less likely to ride on sidewalks when on-street bike lanes exist. When they ride on sidewalks, studies have shown that it increases their accident risk 25 times. This occurs primarily because motorists pulling onto roadways tend to focus on street traffic. As a result, a driver may fail to see sidewalk bicyclists and collide with them when the cyclists cross a driveway where motorists are merging into roadway traffic.

"Bike lanes reinforce the concept that bicyclists are supposed to behave like other vehicles, and make life safer for everyone involved as a result," Hallett said.

University of Texas – College of Engineering, September 18, 2006



Bicycle must become a priority for urban mobility, evidences a meeting of 40 European cities

Three European projects about promotion of bike mobility and sustainable transport, gathering about 40 European cities and their partners, met

together in the Polish city of Augustow, so as to compare their efforts and consider strategies for enhancement of urban bike mobility.

On 6-8 September 2006, in Augustow (North-East Poland), participants of 38 European municipalities, public actors and NGOs met in occasion of a meeting between 3 European Cooperation Projects on the issue of promotion of bike mobility.

Baltic Sea Cycling, UrBike and MoCuBa are 3 European projects of cooperation between cities, cofinanced by the INTERREG European Program. They met in occasion of a workshop organized in this city of the Podlasie Region by the Baltic Sea Cycling project.

During the 3-day workshops, all participants stated a similar need to make mobility by bike, by foot and by public transport, a real priority, and concretely take the measures that will allow citizens to move by bike safely and pleasantly.

Participants indeed felt they were participating in a historic moment because of the contact established between new EU member cities (from Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Cyprus) with cities from former EU members that have the same needs and the same will. "We observe that cities from East and South of Europe have similar reactions against mobility problems than us in Sweden", says Gunnar Persson, project leader of Baltic Sea Cycling in Örebro.

Indeed, these EU projects showed that bike mobility is not anymore an option, but has become a priority step of good traffic planning, and more generally a valid tool for urban sustainable development. "Bike mobility has now become a mainstream tendency in urban mobility, and it is probably a wise choice in the current context of high oil prices", noted Raphael Calvelli, working with City Factory for Municipality of Sevilla, lead partner of Urbike.

The bike is a particularly good complement to public transport networks, noted participants: "public transport companies should now provide bike integration through setting protected bike parks near the train stations and allowing to carry bikes on buses and trains," explained Michael Frömming, coordinator for the MoCuBa project ('Mobility Culture for the Baltic Sea Area'). This expectancy is addressed in the European Strategy for Urban Environment (COM/2005/718), that favours a non-compulsory approach for cities towards a sustainable environment. Another related European policy is set by the Directives on Air Quality, that make compulsory the provision of measures by local authorities so as to keep air pollutants under determined levels.

Participants expressed their interest to continue to work together in the future for cycling and sustainable development. Indeed, the Structural Funds of the European Union, that will allocate 308 billion euros in the period 2007-2013 for regional development, include sustainable

development and urban issues as eligible priorities, and there are already projects being prepared for bike urban mobility. "Citizens want to go by bike, they know it will make their cities more worth living, and they see that Europe could give help to get it", reported Frankas Wurft, from partner NGO Lithuanian Cyclist Community, from Vilnius.

The 38 municipalities participating in these three projects represent around 4 million inhabitants from 13 countries of Europe.

Press release, European INTERREG Projects, 19 September 2006



**Are you keen to see more people cycling more often
in New Zealand?**

Education Manager Role – Applications Sought



BikeNZ is currently recruiting to the position of Education Manager.

This pivotal role within BikeNZ's organisational structure is responsible for leading the development and delivery of technical education programmes that will embrace all cycling and biking disciplines – road, track, mountain biking and BMX.

This role requires excellent planning, communication and administration skills. You will need to demonstrate a successful, proven record in business administration, however whilst a cycling background is desirable, it is not essential. In addition applicants should have:

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- Experience within the field of sport development

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