

SPOKES & FOLKS

"The world lies right beyond the handlebars of any bicycle."

-Daniel Behrman

Issue One: June 2010



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

By Dan Lill

Nine. One thousand three hundred sixty nine. Eight thousand. One hundred and fifty three. Twelve. Numbers can be so insignificant when taken by themselves and yet can be so very important when attached to a story. Such is the case at R Community Bikes Inc. and our story.

Nine years ago, at St Joseph's House of Hospitality, a guest inquired if there was anyone capable of repairing a flat tire. When Bill Danza volunteered to help, and then continued helping in the weeks that followed, a new venture had begun. That was certainly long before R Community Bikes was even thought of but that was our beginning! Now nine year later, we stand in awe of what has transpired especially in the last three years – expansion,

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GRANT NEWS

By Carl W. Christensen

We received \$1500 grant from St. Paul's Episcopal Church to fund kids' helmets. Thanks to Hank for the tip.

We have pending applications:

Greater Rochester Health Foundation: \$7400 to outfit the trailer as a mobile shop with workbenches, tools, bike stands, etc. We should hear more around May or June. We have been funded for the past two years by this group for our kids program and this grant should help us expand our capacity in a major way.

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TOOL TIP

From Jimlanglely.net

Hands-Only Flat Tire Removal and Installation

Removing and installing bicycle tires by hand only — no levers needed — is the way we bike mechanics do it because it's the easiest and fastest way. And, it's the way bicycle tires are made to be installed and removed. So you could say it's the *right* way to do it too.

Using your hands only also speeds flat tire repair so you don't cool down or catch a chill on wet or snowy rides. There's also no need to dig in your seat bag for your tire levers. And, you won't run the risk of a second flat by forcing the tire on with the levers, a common mistake, and completely unnecessary.

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Three Generations of Cycling Repair

By Tim Avery

To most Rochestarians, a bitter Saturday morning in February doesn't immediately inspire thoughts of cycling. Saturday mornings in the dead of winter are reserved either for sleeping in or waking early and shoveling out of a blizzard. Road salt and slush ridges send all but the heartiest of cyclists to their basements, perhaps to spin away an hour on a stationary bike while glued to old Tour de France videos. This is usually the case, but not at R-Community Bikes.

On any given Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday, you'll find 25 – 30 volunteers buffing old chrome forks, twiddling with center-pull brakes, or pulling a bottom bracket's bearing housing. It's a February morning: high school students and

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From Page One formalization, incorporation and so much more.

One thousand three hundred sixty nine bikes were given away in one calendar year. Beginning in the cold winter months there were only a few bikes given to those who ride all year long. Then, progressing through the spring months, the demand was the highest and we realized that a thousand bikes was a possibility. We culminated with the celebration of our thousandth bike given away in mid summer. Our total for the year more than doubled our previous year's total which we had thought would be our high water mark for quite some time. Little did we know.

Eight thousand volunteer hours were contributed during this past year. Someone estimated that those hours were the equivalent of a small company working full time for an entire year. That's quite a feat and a testament to the dedication of our many volunteers who staff the shop four days a week now a doubling of what we had done just 2 years ago. Happily, the number of hours continues to increase.

One hundred and fifty three volunteers are currently on our active roles. Some volunteer every day that we're open. Others come in one or two days. Every volunteer comes with a different set of skills and interests but all are welcome and their efforts are appreciated by RCB and also by the vast majority of our recipients.

Twelve is the number of countries represented on our front office map. One of our greatest challenges and also greatest joys has been working with the ever expanding population of refugees in our community. All of them are exiles from their own countries and are beginning new lives here in Rochester. The bikes that we give them provide a way of transportation in an unfamiliar environment and in their own way, these folks say "thank you".

So numbers can be sterile and uninteresting but when seen in the context of the "big picture", they can take on a life of their own and go a long way in telling what an organization is and will become.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: JACOB O'NEIL

By Dan Lill



Jacob O'Neill is probably one of the first people you'll meet when you begin volunteering at R Community Bikes. He will make you feel welcome right from the start and that is one of his most endearing qualities. To feature him in this inaugural edition of our newsletter, it's probably best to ask other volunteers about their experiences with Jacob. Here in their own words are the responses from several of Jacob's new found friends.

"It was Jacob who greeted me with a big smile and 'two thumbs up'. From that day on when we see each other Jacob comes over shakes my hand, pats my back and gives me the thumbs up. He makes my day. He makes me smile. We've often w o r k e d t o g e t h e r wrenching bikes and if I don't move fast enough on pizza day, Jacob brings me a slice of pizza and a napkin gesturing to me to stop work and eat. The spirit and passion Jacob applies is infectious and is one of many influences which makes my volunteering fun and rewarding"

-Steven

"Jacob always seems to be in good spirits. He shakes hands every day I meet him. He is very quick to help me out. He seems to be watching if I'm in his area and is quick to hold up electrical conduit, help pull wire, or get some bikes out of the way so I can run some wire or air lines. He is enjoyable to work with."

-Dave

"One of the things I love about Jacob is that he pitches right in to whatever task is at hand. One time he saw that I was looking for a front reflector and he found one for me. Another time I was about to cut off a rusty chain with the bolt cutters and Jacob took the cutters and cut the chain. He followed that by flexing his bicep to show me how strong he is. Jacob always greets me with a handshake, fist bump, or a thumbs up. He's a great addition to RCB."

-Bill

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From Page 2 “Jacob is willing to do most anything to help out. He works well with others, has a great sense of humor and likes to kid around. He is a pleasure to work with.”

-Fred

“A few weeks ago, one of the younger volunteers was trying to remove a lock from one of the bikes and nothing seemed to even scratch it. Jacob, who was working nearby, soon had a hack saw in hand and went at it. I heard someone say, ‘You’re going to be there all day’. Of course Jacob, not hearing this, kept at it and had that lock off in near record time. Those of us around him let our cheers and gave him the thumbs up sign. He is a hard worker and a pleasure to be around”.

-Dave

As Dave noted, Jacob is deaf and has a long history of major medical problems but at 226 Hudson, he’s just one of the guys and he loves it. Just ask his Mom, Anne or Dad, Tim who help Jacob with transportation on both Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Having been, in another life, Jacob’s teacher, I know where he has been and what he’s been through but that’s old news now. With his attitude and work ethic, only good things should come is way. “Thumbs up”.

COMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, MAY 1-PITTSFORD ROTARY BIKE DRIVE

This should be a major collection for us and involves 2 parts. First will be at the school itself and Daves States and Teegarden will man the school site, gathering bikes and spreading the word. Secondly, back at 226 Hudson we'll need some folks to work an early afternoon shift receiving and stacking the bikes that are collected and delivered. The more the merrier.

FRIDAY, MAY 21-BIKE TO WORK DAY

If you're coming in to 226 on that day, consider biking! That's part of the BIKE WEEK events sponsored by the Rochester Cycling Alliance

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5-RIT SUSTAINABILITY MOBILITY FAIR: THE FUTURE OF SHORT TRIP IN OUR COMMUNITY 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

We've been invited to participate in this wonderful event on the campus of RIT.

Click on the website which will explain exactly what the event will involve. Two to four volunteers would be ideal.

SATURDAY, MAY 8-ARNETT BLVD CLINIC AND GIVE AWAY 1 to 3 p.m.

Please contact Joy at joyously@frontiernet.net if you're interested in this event. The rain date is Saturday, May 15.

SATURDAY, MAY 15-MAPLEWOOD LIBRARY GIVE AWAY

In what has become an annual event, we'll be giving away 20 to 25 kids bikes at the Library next to AQ on

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From Page 1 teachers, retirees and 20-somethings, generation Y, X, Z, Next and Past coordinate a chilly dance of bike parts and rust and Simple Green.



One particular Saturday morning, I had invited my father and grandfather to join in the fray. Engineers both, men of science and mechanical know-how, asked by an English major, of all people, to ply their skills in a new field; the irony was not lost on me. And, as I had hoped, they took to it like fish to water. My grandfather--who liberated Nazi death camps in the European Theater, who remortgaged his home to start a family engineering business, who still, at 82, gardens and meets weekly in an Old Philosopher's Club--wanted to work on a bike without my assistance. His sense of independence hasn't waned an iota.

He and my father shared a bike stand all morning, only rarely coming to me with a question. They fit in like bearings in a well-greased race: nearly frictionlessly. Knowing the way my dad and grandfather work, I checked up on them surreptitiously, catching a glance here or there, directing questions to lead mechanics, setting a bottle of Liquid Wrench on a nearby workbench when a stem was frozen, playing their game. It was a spectator's dream, and from my stand, I couldn't help but chuckle from time to time as they translated civil engineerese into bike-shop-speak.

I know few platforms where three generations of a family come together to serve the community. There are organizations that cater to young, fiery activists and there are nursing home sitting rooms of octogenarians knitting scarves and mittens for the underprivileged; there are high school honor societies that promote service projects and there are celebrity golf benefits stuccoed with mid-lifers. But it is a rare place indeed that provides a multi-generational volunteering experience. Thanks, R-Community Bikes, for being that kind of place.

ROCHESTER MAKES LIST OF FRIENDLIEST BIKING CITIES

Rochester made Bicycling.com's list of America's top 50 Bike-Friendly Cities! Where did we come in on the list? Well, all the way down at number 50. But hey, it's a good start! You can read about Rochester's friendly streets and learn about the other cities that made the list by visiting www.bicycling.com/topbikefriendlycities.

From Page 1 But the best reason to learn to pop bike tires on and off by hand is to impress your ride partners. The only problem is that once you show them, you may become the designated flat-fixer on rides from now on. But, like me, you might actually enjoy that. You can teach it too, like I do with my Jim Langley Easy Flat Repair Class at cycling camps.

Gorilla Grip Not Necessary

Contrary to popular belief, tremendous hand strength has nothing to do with getting tires on/off by hand. What actually does is a simple mechanical principle designed into all clincher tires and rims. But, the design is so old few people hear about it. Or maybe the original makers of tire levers conspired with the rim and tire makers to keep the hands-only instructions a secret so they could sell loads of tire levers?

Find The Rim Well

Here's the secret. If you look at a rim with the tire and tube removed, you'll see that there's a channel at the center of the rim that's significantly deeper than the sides of the rim where the tire sits when inflated. This is also where the rim strip, and the spoke nipples are. It's called the rim "well," and it's the key to hands-only tire removal and installation.

Because the rim well is deeper, it's also the part of the rim with the smallest diameter. In fact, if the rim didn't have sides, you'd be able to place it inside the tire because that part of the rim is smaller.

How It's Done

There are sides on rims though. There have to be to keep the tires on when they're inflated. So, to install and remove tires, you need to lift them over the sides of the rim. And, that's where the rim well comes in.

The mistake people make and the reason tire levers seem necessary is because cyclists mistakenly install and remove the tires when they're sitting on the sides of the rim where they are designed NOT to come off, so they don't blow off when inflated.

By simply placing the tire in the rim well first, pushing and holding it there if necessary, the tire can be stretched by hand up and onto the rim for installation, or up and over the rim walls for removal.

Tips

For installation, it's easiest to mount one side of the tire at a time. When removing tires be sure to let all the air out of the tube and work as much of the tire as you can into the rim well before lifting it off. It's also best not to have too bulky a tube, as they interfere. Use a 23mm-wide tube for 25mm road tires, for example. Lastly, it does take a little practice to master the hands-only technique, but it's mostly a matter of using the rim well. Now that you know the secret, you can do it!

From Page 1 Cateye: requesting 2000 reflectors from the self-described largest bike reflector firm in the country. As our production increases, you may notice a chronic shortage of reflectors and this would solve that bottle neck in the shop.

League of American Bicyclists: we've been nominated as a bike friendly business. There's no money awarded, but it would give us national visibility and credibility.

To all volunteers: if your church, employer or other connections have charitable giving programs that want to support RCB, please let me know and I will follow up. We need to expand our resource base and spread the joy of being part of the RCB community.

Transportation head wants more emphasis on bikes, walking

From the Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Transportation secretary says the days of favoring motorized transportation over non-motorized are over.

Ray LaHood says the government will give bicycling, as well as walking, the same importance as automobiles in transportation planning and the selection of projects for federal money. A policy statement LaHood put on his blog recommends including biking and walking lanes on bridges and clearing snow from bike paths.

Cyclists are delighted, with one Web site calling him "cycling's man of the century." But a blog run by The National Association of Manufacturers calls the policy "dumb and irresponsible." It says the approach is "nonsensical for a modern industrial nation."

LaHood says he's surprised by that reaction, saying he's not talking about giving cyclists and walkers the only voice, just a voice.

Thanks!

From **Linda Ballerstein**, Volunteer for Life Solutions, Hilton, NY
(Where we held a give away event. Linda Left this message along with a donation)

Dear Tim (Kearney), Tom (Soeder), Lowell (Smogger), John (Zackman) and Dan (Lill),

Your participation in our Easter Distribution was so appreciated! You guys were great with the kids and your choice of bicycles was perfect. I think the children's excited faces told the story of how much your efforts and time meant! We realize that much effort went into preparing, transporting and adjusting the bicycles. It is a wonderful ministry that you perform and I know that you have touched many, many lives.

We hope that Life Solutions of Hamlin can continue our relationship with you in the future. God Bless You All.

From **Lorraine Swanton** who is one of our ardent supporters. Lorraine is Dave Silloway's (The Bike Zone) brother's mother-in-law. She has sent numerous donations over the course of the past three years. Sometimes it's the last check in her checkbook, sometimes it's a memorial for a friend, and sometimes, as with this one, it's just to celebrate life. With her donation she writes very simply:

Happy Spring!

To Our Readers,

First of all, I'd like to say thanks for taking the time to read the inaugural addition of Spokes and Folks. My hope is that this newsletter becomes an outlet for you to share what's on your biking minds.

That being said, this newsletter is a work in progress and I'd like everyone to know that their feedback is greatly appreciated. If you have questions or comments, please let me know. If you don't like the font or think the layout stinks, tell me. I'm open to all suggestions and will not blindly shoot down any ideas. It's important to me that this newsletter reaches it's full potential and I want those reading to be excited about each new issue.

That being said, I need your help. We'll be releasing four issues a year and I'll be looking for volunteers to write articles, come up with story ideas and send in pictures. Your submissions can be as simple as copying an interesting bike-related article you found on the web or a description of a fun ride you took with a friend. I don't mind. Just send it my way.

Issues of Spokes and Folks will be released in March, June, September and December. With each issue I'm hoping to include articles such as Volunteer Spotlight, Tool Tip, Coming Events, Featured Rides, and pretty much anything else you can come up with.

I hope you enjoyed reading and I look forward to hearing your feedback.

Sincerely,

Eric Marlowe
Marlowe1282@yahoo.com

From Page 3 Dewey Ave. We'd like to have three to four volunteers for this event as we need to fit helmets and bikes for neighborhood kids and our presence usually includes some repairs as well.

SATURDAY, MAY 29-ASSISI PEACE WALK

This is a fundraiser for RCB and there are two ways to help. First, you can donate to one of our walkers (currently me) and we will get half of what is pledged. Secondly, and more fun, you can earn money by walking yourself and again, we will get half of the proceeds with the other half going to Assisi Peace Institute which is sponsoring the event and doing all the work for us. One of the great things about this event is that walkers don't have to handle/collect any monies as all pledges are collected on line. You can see how it works by going to my web page at <http://www.firstgiving.com/danlill> Thanks to Ellie Grinols who was my first pledge and put me well on my way to my goal of \$1000 - an arbitrary goal to be sure!

FINALLY, EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Two nights TBD 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Pizza provided. To assist Joy, Bill Cochrane and approximately 5 to 10 scouts in sorting and organizing parts. Ideally one of the volunteers should have advanced knowledge of bike parts to help identify categories and sorting criteria. We are looking for interested parties at this point and we'll determine the schedule based on everyone's availability.

The sign up calendar will be available beginning this weekend. If you'd like to help out with any of these events, we'd be happy to write a note on your behalf to whomever explaining your involvement.