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# ChainGuard



Volume 18 No. 4

San Diego County Bicycle Coalition

July–August 2004

*On guard for bicyclists throughout the San Diego region.*

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## Tourist Train or Bikeway? It's Time to Speak Up for Bicycling!

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, September 7 (the date is tentative, so call before coming) and, if you can, join us in telling the San Diego City Council that extension of the Bayshore Bikeway from Chula Vista to Imperial Beach is important to bicyclists.

As a next step in the long-awaited completion of the Bayshore Bikeway around San Diego Bay, there is a plan to convert a 1½ -mile stretch of a century-old rail line into a bike path that will give bicyclists a safer, more scenic ride between Chula Vista and Imperial Beach. However, there are some who would use that section for a "tourist train."



*Bicyclists dodge cars on IB's Palm Ave—we need a bikeway here!*

Last year the City of San Diego's Historical Resources Board designated the 1½-mile section of the Coronado Branch Line a historic resource. (See the *ChainGuard* article in the January-February 2004 issue for more.)

With our help, the council could vote to overturn the Historical Resources Board's decision. While we are not questioning whether the rail line is a historic site and worthy of preservation, the Coalition's Board would like to convince the city council to use the railway right-of-way to complete the Bayshore Bikeway through here.

Allowing the historic designation to stand would not stop construction of the bike path, said County Supervisor Greg Cox, who has been instrumental in the Bayshore Bikeway's development. It may, however, delay construction and increase costs if new environmental impacts are found, he said.

Portions of the rail right of way are wide enough to preserve the old rails and ties and have a bike path, but just north of Imperial Beach, the bikeway needs to use two old railroad bridges. Between these bridges, there is not enough room for both.

"Ultimately, our goal is to have a separate bike path going all the way around the bay," Cox said. Over the years, officials from each of the affected government agencies have collaborated on the development of the bikeway route.

A crowd of bicyclists in the council chambers on September 7 could mean success!

To find out more, or to confirm the meeting date, contact Kathy Keehan, Executive Director, at (858) 487-6063, or check <[www.sdcbc.org](http://www.sdcbc.org)>.

# Festival Celebrates SR56 Freeway Opening; Bikeway Almost Done



Close to 1000 bicyclists turned out July 17 to ride the final four mile section of the SR56 freeway at a festival held on the virgin concrete two days before the freeway opened to car traffic. A boisterous crowd of bicyclists and pedestrians paraded behind the San Diego Mayor's slow-moving vintage convertible down the new freeway lane to celebrate the opening.

The real surprise, however, was seeing the long-awaited, parallel SR56 bikeway fully paved—or almost. With minor exceptions the bikeway paving now runs just south of the freeway for 9+ miles from El Camino Real in Del Mar on the west end to Rancho Penasquitos Blvd. on the east end. The bikeway is still

closed as of this writing, as Caltrans is using the path for vehicle access to the edge finishing and landscaping projects along the freeway. Caltrans can delay opening the bikeway as late as December, although an earlier opening is possible.

After decades in the planning, freeway and bikeway construction began 13 years ago. Throughout the project the Coalition board advocated for construction of the bikeway parallel to the freeway as promised during design, intervening frequently when lack of funds threatened the bikeway. Although there are several at-grade, controlled crossings, bicyclists will soon enjoy uninterrupted stretches up to four miles long.

## SDCBC Board

San Diego County Bicycle Coalition's Officers

*Chair:* Brian Parent  
*Vice Chair:* Stephan Vance  
*Treasurer:* Kerry Kunsman  
*Secretary:* Jim Baross

## SDCBC Board Members

Myles Pomeroy – Sierra Club Bike Section  
 Carol Carr – N. County Cycle Club  
 Philip Erdelsky - Rainbow Cyclists  
 Chuck Gilbert – SD Cyclovets  
 Ken King – Knickerbikers  
 Bob Richardson – SD Bicycle Club  
 Tony Pietsch – SD Tandem Club  
 Greg Zackowski – Triathlon Club of SD  
 Jim Baross  
 Roman Beck  
 K.C. Butler  
 Kerry Kunsman  
 Bill Matella  
 Brian Parent  
 Judith Talner  
 Stephan Vance

Executive Director – Kathy Keehan  
 Board meetings are held **the second Wednesday** of each month at 6:30 PM.  
 Locations noted in Calendar Section.

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## Critical Mass Rides

The monthly self-described "Critical Mass" rides continue, meeting at 7:00 pm the big fountain in front of the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in Balboa Park on the last Friday of each month. To subscribe to the email listserv, go to <<https://libertad.ucsd.edu/mailman/listinfo/critical-mass>>.

## Brian Parent Elected Coalition Chair

At the general membership meeting on June 9, Brian Parent was elected as the Coalition Chair, Stephan Vance was elected Vice Chair, and Kerry Kunsman was elected Treasurer. Jim Baross continues as Secretary. All eight club reps and alternate positions were also filled with volunteers.

The Coalition Board truly appreciates all the years of service given by those members retiring from the board this year, and in particular, wants to recognize several individuals: K.C. Butler, who has served as Chair for the past four years, volunteering countless hours on behalf of bicycling during a very busy time for the Coalition; Trevor

Bourget, outgoing Vice Chair and Board member for many years; and finally Ken King, Treasurer for the Coalition for at least a decade (even Ken can't remember how long). Thanks to all of you for volunteering!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Ride of Silence to be Held Friday, August 20

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ride of Silence for Bicycle Equality will be held on Friday, August 20. Meet at 7:00 PM near El Indio's at the corner of Washington and India Streets. Bring a bike light! The event is free, there are no brochures, no sponsors, no registration, just a chance to show respect for fellow cyclists injured or killed by motorists on public roadways.

Time Zone. Although there was only a few days' notice and no publicity, eight riders joined the San Diego ride. Attendance is expected to be higher on August 20.

While the Coalition is not connected with this event, we are sympathetic to the message they are trying to convey, and recognize that changing motorists' perception of bicyclists is critical to everyone's safety on the road. For questions contact Frank Paiano at <wondererd@juno.com>, or call (619) 223-5264.

## Another Successful Street Skills Class

*By Kerry Kunsman*

Several enthusiastic students completed a Road I Street Skills class in June, agreeing overwhelmingly that it was a good decision to take the bicycle skills course. "Everyone should take this course before riding on the roadway," said one rider.

If I've aroused your interest, you'll have another chance in September. I will be holding a Road I Street Skills class on three consecutive Saturdays starting September 18, 9:00 AM to noon, in the Clairemont area west of I-805 and Clairemont Mesa Blvd. The fee for the nine hours of instruction is \$50. If you or someone you know is interested please contact me for a registration form or more information, at <kerryk@tns.net> or call (858) 569-6044.

The first Silent Ride was held in San Diego on May 19, to protest several recent deaths of bicyclists in San Diego County. That day, slow-paced, no-talking rides started in more than 35 cities across the U.S. and Canada at 7:00 PM, beginning in the Eastern Time Zone and concluding in the Western



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- Lifestyle Change: Document how the injury has affected life, family, and recreation and how it will do so in the future. Photos, training logs etc.
- Insurance Adjusters: When an insurance adjuster calls you, tell him/her to contact your lawyer. Do not give a statement or sign records releases.

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# Bike Shorts!

Jim Baross



## ***Video Traffic Lights at SR76 in Lieu of Loop Detector Logos***

After almost three years of discussion regarding bicycle loop detector logos, a decision regarding SR 76 at Olive Hill / Camino Del Rey has been made by Caltrans District 11. Video Detection, an alternative technology for sensing the presence of vehicles, will be used instead at this intersection. It is reportedly immune to the size of vehicle or amount of metal in the object to be detected. When installed, a bicycle need only be wherever a vehicle would be for detection. Detection zones can be created specifically for the bicycle lane. Construction should be completed in June 2005. Caltrans staff offered an apology for the long delay on this issue and thanked local bicyclists for their patience. The Coalition would like to hear about experiences, successful or not, at making traffic signals work for you on a bicycle. Send to <Bike.Buddy@cox.net>.

## ***Roads are for Motor Vehicles Only?***

The Encinitas *Coast News* ran a letter to the editor recently in which the writer, John McKinnon of Oceanside,

stated, "Roads are built for motorized vehicles, not bicyclists." Frank Paiano provided this reply to the *Coast News*, in part, "This is simply not true. California Vehicle Code Section 21200 states that, 'Every person riding a bicycle upon a street or highway has all the rights and is subject to all the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle.' This also means that bicyclists have the right to take the lane when it is the safest and most practical method of utilizing the roadway, specifically but not limited to when there is debris in the roadway, the lane is far too narrow for a motor vehicle and a bicycle, and there are parked motor vehicles on the side of the roadway with the resulting possibility of doors carelessly flung open. There is more than one type of user of the public right-of-way, whether or not a few disgruntled motorists want to believe it or not." Thanks, Frank.

## ***Gordy Shields Bridge Opens, then Closes; Signs Disappear***

The new Gordy Shields Bike Bridge on the Bayshore Bikeway opened in April, then promptly closed July 21 through the end of August, while work is done improving the barriers along the freeway. The closure is **supposed** to be only during work hours, but with no detour signs and a serious chain link fence at the north end, you'll have to make your own way on the old, confusing route through National City to continue on the bikeway.

Also during July, several signs posted at the north end of the bridge where it joins the Sweetwater River Bike Path have disappeared. Bicyclists not familiar with this new bike path may miss the turn once it reopens. The northern entrance is best described as a suddenly appearing 90-degree gap in a retaining wall on the north side of the Sweetwater River Bike Path. Other entrances are also similarly unmarked.

## ***Harbor Drive Railroad Crossing Safer***

A railroad grade crossing on Harbor Drive near the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company has long been one of the most hazardous parts of the Bayshore Bikeway, causing bicyclists to dismount or swerve into the road to safely cross. The crossing has at long last been improved. Sharply angled striped bike lanes now lead bicyclists across the tracks at nearly right angles on newly constructed crossing pads. On-street car parking was removed to provide the additional space. Also, the particularly rough milled pavement on the bike lane on southbound Harbor Drive just south of the San Diego Convention Center has been repaved and restriped. It's now better than ever.

## ***Midnight Madness August 21***

Now in its 31<sup>st</sup> year, the Midnight Madness bike ride will be held August 21, benefiting the Optimist Club. For information call (619) 645-8068, or contact <www.midnightmadness.active.com>.

## You Could Win a Breezer Bike

Adams Avenue Bicycles and Breezer Bikes have teamed up for a drawing where you could win a cool cruiser bike from Breezer Bikes.

You can see the prize on display at the Whole Foods grocery in Hillcrest on 7<sup>th</sup> and University Avenues, where you'll also find the raffle tickets.

While we are asking for only a 50¢ donation for each ticket submitted, please consider making a larger (and tax-deductible) donation. All profits from the drawing will benefit the Coalition. We are a 501(c)3 organization with a non-profit status because we advocate for improving bicycling conditions throughout San Diego County—that makes your donation tax-deductible!

Hurry in to Whole Foods before the raffle ends. No need to be present for the drawing, the winner will be notified. Good luck!

## SDCBC Calendar

**Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> – SDCBC Board Meeting.** 6:30–8:30 PM, Standley Recreation Center, 3585 Governor Drive, San Diego. All Coalition members are encouraged to attend.

**Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> – Volunteer night.** 6:30–8:30 PM, Location TBD. Envelope stuffing, pizza eating and story sharing. Please join us!

**Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> – Imperial Beach bikeway** item discussed at the

San Diego City Council Meeting (tentative date).

**Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> – SDCBC Board Meeting.** 6:30–8:30 PM, Standley Recreation Center, 3585 Governor Drive, San Diego. Open to everyone.

**Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> – Volunteer night.** 6:30–8:30 PM, Location TBD. Newsletter stuffing, pizza eating and story sharing. Please join us!

## Membership Counts

We all want to ride safer, and that means better drivers, safer roads, more bike parking, more transit access, and other improvements that will require a powerful and well-organized movement. If you're reading this newsletter and are not yet a member of the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, please consider joining. We rely on the support of our members to accomplish our work. Your membership at any level will make a difference.

## Old Otay Mesa Road Still Closed

As of July 5, Old Otay Mesa Road was still closed, leaving bicyclists and pedestrians with no reasonable alternate route between San Ysidro and Otay Mesa (Thomas 1350 H2-J2). The only alternate route for bicyclists and pedestrians is via Main Street and Heritage Road, nearly two miles to the north.

## Spare change?

Has your membership expired? Check your address form on this newsletter. If your membership has expired, or is set to expire soon, why not take a moment to renew?

Regular individual annual membership is only \$25.00 to help support SDCBC and to bring you the *ChainGuard* for a year. Or join for "A Buck A Week" (\$52 per year) and receive a SDCBC bumper sticker and a copy of "Street Smarts". Join for \$100 a year and get a special SDCBC T-shirt to show your "Velorevolutionary" spirit!

Other levels of membership, tax-deductible donations, and bicycle club member discounted memberships are available. Call (858) 487-6063, e-mail to [execdir@sdcbc.org](mailto:execdir@sdcbc.org), or visit our web site at [www.sdcbc.org](http://www.sdcbc.org) for more information and registration.

Or just send your (large) check and this registration form to: SDCBC, P.O. Box 34544, San Diego CA 92163

### Membership Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

add my e-mail address to the SDCBC email list-server.

please do not share my name with other organizations.

Membership Level/Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Road Safety Q and A

Your Bike Buddy answers your questions:

**SW asks:** I reported a crash I had when a driver hit me and knocked me off my bike. Later I reported this to the police. But nothing is being done. What happened?

**A:** Many bicyclists are grumbling about the apparent increases in hit-and-run incidents, near misses, brush-backs and serious crashes caused by motorists.

Is it getting worse? Depends on who you talk to and where you ride. Bike Buddy sees more cars, impatient and inattentive drivers, cell phones and video use in cars, roadway construction—you can probably add to the list.

We all think making people responsible for their illegal acts is important. When we successfully report trouble-making behavior, we help reduce it. More education and lots more enforcement would make bike travel safer.

So, you were the victim of a hit-and-run motorist while you are riding your bike in what you believe was a safe and legal manner? What should you do if you are involved in a hit-and-run crash?

If you can move, get to a safe place out of traffic. Stay put—don't leave the scene. Sit or lie down and assess your injuries. As soon as possible, contact the police (911) to report the incident or get someone else to call while you are recovering.

Ask for police to come to the scene. Report your injuries and the exact location.

**If you leave the scene, you have lost an opportunity.** Your Bike Buddy has found out that even if you can report the license number of the car, filing a report after-the-fact hasn't been as successful as an on the spot action.

Future Bike Buddy columns will deal with ways we can protect ourselves. Do you have questions about how to handle a traffic situation? If so, email us at <bike.buddy@cox.net> or call the Coalition to leave a message for the Bike Buddy at (858) 487-6063. We will answer you directly or cover the topic in a future issue.

*Has your SDCBC membership expired?  
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