

THE REFLECTOR

PROMOTING HEALTH FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

A Newsletter from the OHSU Bike Commuter Group

February 2005

SLEEPY DOCS ON THE ROAD!

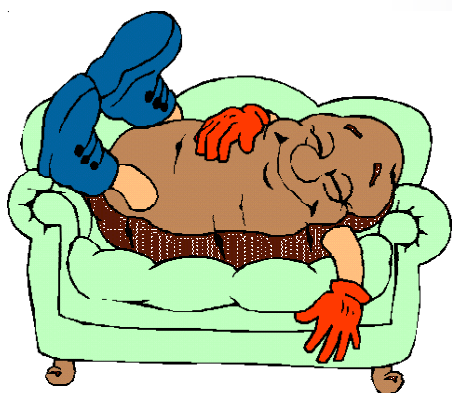
A new study shows that doctors in training (ie., residents) are twice as likely to have a car accident after a long shift. They are six times more likely to have a close call caused by snoozing at the wheel. "Each extended work shift increased chances of a car crash by 16 percent on the commute home and raised the risk of any crash by 9 percent for that month." This study was conducted at Harvard Medical School. For more info, see the NY Times article [click HERE](#).

THE COUCH POTATO STUDY

from *New Scientist* magazine

A study from the Mayo Clinic indicates that the difference between a couch potato and a lean bean is about 2 hours. Here's how they did it: "The team designed undergarments fitted with sensors to study the posture and movements of 20 self-proclaimed 'couch potatoes' for 10 days. Half of the participants were lean, while the others were mildly obese. The team found that the obese people sat for about 2.5

hours longer per day than the lean people. That translates to an extra 350 calories for the same daily food intake and could mean that these 'extreme' couch potatoes pack on an extra 15 kilograms per year. Levine says the results show 'you



don't have to join a gym or buy expensive equipment to lose weight — it's available to you right now." To read more, [click HERE](#).

AN OHSU COMMUTER'S STORY

I used to wake up to a clamorous electronic claxon. At my sweetie's urging, I bought a one dollar clock radio and then woke up to either earnest liberal rantings or folk songs about love and murder depending on how early I had to get up. Lately it has been to the CD of my choosing because Eli couldn't stand it anymore and bought me a fancy alarm clock during my OB rotation when I had to get up every morning at 4:45. So I've been waking up lately to girl country — the Dixie Chicks, Dolly. I hear songs about being done wrong by a man or leaving small towns behind in search of love, life, music in short 5 second bursts before I hit the snooze button.

Lately, I haven't had enough energy to even get undressed when I go to bed. Eli is reading me the *Phantom Tollbooth* until I fall asleep. "Remember this part, they're driving the car in search of those two princesses and they've run into that guy who grows down?" I nod (lying). He starts reading and I start to remember bits of the story from the night before just as I fall asleep again.

I wake up in my clothes and get my biking stuff on and Eli goes downstairs and makes me lunch, offering me choices. "Energy bar?" "Want an apple or orange?" "Sesame thingies?" "Carob energy bombs? I know it's carob, which usually sucks, but they're actually really good — although slightly fartogenic . . ." I laugh at his lunch commentary while I gather and put on bike shoes, gloves, helmet.

My ride starts downhill and tears run down my face from the cold air so I start each day crying. It's like crying while cutting onions — I'm not crying tears of sadness, happiness or rage but if I decided to I could move into it easily having already gotten a head start. If I pass by the coffee shop after six I wonder what I look like to the intellectual contractors sipping coffee over their papers before hitting their respective jobsites.

I angle through the diagonal street cutting through Ladd's addition. It's dark and there's no one else around except that every morning there is an old man who starts to cross the street when he sees me coming down the road. He waits for me and times his street — crossing just right so that he stands on the circular median so that he can witness my passing with a small greeting gesture he makes

BIKE TO WORK!



The Bike Commuter Group (BCG) promotes bicycling as a healthy mode of transportation that benefits individuals and the environment. For more information about the BCG or to find ways to get involved, contact us at bike@ohsu.edu or visit our website at www.ohsu.edu/bike/.

More than Enough

There are real cultural problem when defining what is enough. Whether you 'have' or 'have-not' often depends on where you live. The U.S. consumes more than anywhere else – because we live here and are employed we are 'haves'; thus, it is our social responsibility to be conscious of our consumption habits. Those of us living consciously may encounter animosity or curiosity from the culture clash we create. Sometimes we can turn the tables and inspire others. This requires us to be gentle in our language (that is, not judgemental, angry, or self-righteous). Do what is right, and teach others to do the same. Lots of conundrums come up when we become conscious shoppers. Is it better to buy organic beans from China or conventional beans from a local farmer? Petroleum products are used to ship the organic beans here, but they are also used in the pesticides and fertilizers by the local farmer. It can get complicated when making these choices, and overwhelming when you are first beginning to increase your consumer awareness. A progression of changes to simplify your lifestyle can make anxiety manageable. It is also good to consider having a mentor, someone who has a simple lifestyle, whom you can advise you when you run into difficult choices or someone who already has a list of ideas or resources.

In a discussion group tackling this topic, a member told a striking story about the American nightmare. She went to an old friend's wedding (someone who she's loved despite their differences that grew over the years). She found herself surrounded by women who have it all (cars, houses, clothes, jewelry) but have nothing to do. They are bored, they spend their time shopping, they are addicted to prescription drugs, they spend their time comparing themselves to neighbors,

Live simply that others may simply live.
– Mohandas Gandhi

social peers, or media images. This story reminds me of a scene from the recent movie "Garden State." One of the characters invented 'silent velcro' and made millions so he bought a mansion. He has this grand house to live in but it's just a shell. He has no furniture, art, or anything of substance. And there are those with the big stuffed houses who are out renting storage space! How much is enough? Hmmm...

Has shopping become political? Or is it that consumerism in general has become political? The group has discussed advertising as propaganda and the pressure to consume (Christmas merchandise available before Halloween??), coming to the conclusion that the way we spend our money is a form of voting in a capitalist society. According to economic principle, if consumers increase purchases of products labeled fair-trade, sweat-shop free, local, organic, etc., a demand for environmental and global justice will be create. So consume wisely and consciously (which also means 'recycling' by choosing things with a longer life and less packaging) and for your personal benefit, review your expenditures and weigh the pros/cons regarding the life energy and that is in the products you choose.

Resources

A site that helps you use your money consciously!

<http://coopamerica.org/>

Site that informs consumers and empowers workers

<http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/>

Green cleaners:

<http://www.grist.org/advice/ask/2005/01/24/umbra-cleaning/?source=umbra>

Economic Policy Institute:

Research and Ideas for Working People

<http://www.epinet.org/>

How Much is Enough?: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth by Alan Durning

PRINEVILLE (OR) PLAN FEATURES "COMPLETE" NEIGHBORHOODS

from CenterLines, the e-newsletter of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking

According to a Jan. 24th Bend Bulletin article, "In 20 years, Prineville's downtown will be hopping. Its neighborhoods will be linked by trails and sidewalks, dotted with small shops and situated within walking distance to parks and schools. That is the future that Prineville planners have laid out in a draft of the city's first-ever comprehensive plan. With the city in the throes of unprecedented growth, the plan will serve as a road map for development and form the basis for new zoning ordinances and updates, said Prineville's senior planner Dave Reesor. "City officials hope to adopt the plan by this summer," Reesor said. Perhaps most important, the comprehensive plan distills the city's philosophy for future growth, which Reesor characterized as progressive. Built on the idea of "complete" neighborhoods, the plan advocates mixed-used development to close the divide between homes and businesses. 'We're trying to create neighborhoods where residential uses are walkable to parks and open space or to schools or commercial uses. Not just vast seas of residential homes where you have to drive 15 minutes to get a loaf of bread,' Reesor said..."

Source: http://www.bendbulletin.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=15461

Archive search: <http://www.bendbulletin.com/news/search.cfm>

with his cane. I always spend the next few blocks wondering – am I the only person he does this for or does he spend his morning waiting for other cyclists to come by? What does it mean for him – is it part of a complex obsessive-compulsive ritual, working out the time needed for each person depending on their speed? Is he trying to be menacing or creepy? Is it his way of being kind, having me and maybe others feel less alone in the dark, sending us a solemn tribute as we move towards our day's endeavors. I've started saying a tentative gruff "hello" as I pass by, I am unsure of his intentions.

Over the bridge now, the water swirls below me. I look for the logs that the logging companies float down river. It seems such an old thing, an old way of moving timber. I wouldn't believe it unless I'd seen the large jams that form around Sauvie Island and heard that the occasional kayaker is pinned under a floating log and drowned.

Through the streets, past the jogging university Crew team-15 strong and large women incongruously materializing in the morning darkness of the empty streets. Up towards the Hill. Past the dead raccoon on the edge of the bike lane. I breathe in deep and hold my breath as I glide by it, watch its decay progress each day. Seeing it feels different now that its form is less recognizable. I avoid the glass from the smashed bottles that appeared the other day, responsible for the short plague of flat tires that afflicted me last week.

Up the last steep bit where I start to wonder why I do this every morning but I'm over that by the time I make a left turn into the VA parking lot – past the cops sitting in the cruiser, past the glassed in smoking room with sick old men with IV poles and nurses sitting together in their shared affliction, caregiver and receiver alike.

Into the locker room where food service workers call out to one another, "Monday again! I can't believe it- I just left this rotten place." They trade banter and talk about husbands and managers and their gardens and joke about their old tired bodies. They put on their uniforms and hairnets and rush off to clock in or they'll get in trouble for being late. I see my locker room comrades later, share elevators with them and their food carts as they deliver patients their meals. I say hello but they never seem to recognize me clothed and in my white coat.

If you would like to share your commuting story with the rest of us, please send your story to bike@ohsu.edu.

BKE COMMUTER INCENTIVE

The OHSU Parking Office is pleased to announce an incentive program for bike commuters.

Effective, Feb 21, 2005, the OHSU Parking Office will offer the **OHSU Commuter Card**. This is a FREE punch card to be used by those folks who bike to the OHSU campus. Here is how the program works:

Come to the OHSU parking Office or the OHSU Parking Information Booth to get your free OHSU Commuter Card. Next, everytime you ride your bike to campus, ride through the OHSU Parking Information Booth. Your card will be punched and you will be on your way. The best part is when your card is filled up, you will receive a credit toward the next month of parking (if you are an OHSU parker), or a \$50 check mailed to your home (for non-OHSU parkers). All for riding your bike!

For details on this program, please contact me at timmena@ohsu.edu , or call the OHSU Parking Office at 4-8283.

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