








# Notes from the BCG

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July 7, 2004

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## **The Annual BCG Bike Fair - NEW DATE**

The BCG will be hosting the Annual Summer Bike Fair on **AUGUST 4** from noon to 2 pm. We encourage bicyclists and others to get involved. Below is a list of things you can do to help:

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- 1. Volunteer to sit at our table for the event and welcome your fellow bicyclists
- 2. Go to your favorite bike shop and ask for a donation for door prizes and raffles
- 3. Put up fliers in your building

If you are interested in volunteering for this event or if you have ideas to make this a successful event that will encourage people to ride bikes to OHSU, please write to the Bike Commuters Group for more details at [bike@ohsu.edu](mailto:bike@ohsu.edu).

## **Bike-the-Vote: An Exercise in American Democracy**

A small group of twenty-something bicyclists have embarked on a journey to change the United States. They are biking across the country to encourage U.S. citizens to exercise their right to participate in democracy. They began the campaign on June 20, 2004 from New Haven, CT. They will ride across the country with the goal of registering 3500 new voters by the time they reach Portland, OR on Patriots Day, September 11. Visit their website to track their route, read their biographies, and see the photos that will document their historic ride. Bike the Vote is a grassroots organization hoping to invigorate voter participation in the U.S. during the 2004 elections. For more information, go to: <http://www.BikeTheVote.org>

## **Pacific Crest Half-Ironman: A Personal Experience from an OHSU Bike Commuter**

Dodging broken glass, avoiding gravel and dead animals, and timing stoplights so I didn't have to unclip was a small price to pay in preparing for the half-ironman triathlon in Sunriver. And having to swim in freezing water and run in 100-degree temperatures was more than made up for by the pure pleasure and joy experienced while ripping down the backside of Mt. Bachelor.

Okay, the water wasn't freezing (66 degrees), and the temperatures were a comfortable 88 degrees, but I wasn't kidding about that bike ride!

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual running of the Pacific Crest half-ironman took place on June 26, with a total of 592 finishers in the event. By most measures, the weather was perfect considering last year saw temperatures flirting with 100 degrees. This was my first half-ironman event and while my time was a little slower than my original goal, my three most important goals were met: finish, don't be last, and be able to smile. An added bonus was my ability to climb out of bed and actually walk/jog with my friend's dog the next morning.

I consider myself an average athlete in slightly above average fitness, and this was borne out during this event. Taken separately, a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride and 13.1-mile run is challenging but very doable. While training one never does all three and seldom does two of the sports in the same day (at least I didn't). Putting it all together approaches the absurd. Which is how I felt squeezing into a wetsuit, a head-reducing swim cap and getting into 66-degree water. There was great excitement over how "warm" the water was, but warm to me is about 40 degrees higher than that. The wetsuit did a great job of keeping my body warm, but I was reduced to the far-from-dignified doggy paddle for much of the race to avoid getting frostbite on my face. I won't dwell on the misery suffered during the swim, but as I stumbled out of the water, the thought of kneeling down and kissing the dirt did occur to me.

Being so new to the sport, I wouldn't presume to don the label "biker." But when I finally got changed over from the swim and mounted that seat whose comfort I would compare to a brick, I felt a thrill of excitement and relief. At last I was keeping up with and even passing my fellow participants, I was spouting the condescending platitudes, ("Good job, keep it up!") while whizzing by someone sputtering and cursing. I'm still a novice on the bike and by most standards probably don't even ride "well," but this is a sport that makes sense!

I can't imagine a better bike ride than the course included in the Pacific Crest race. For about 20 miles, it's a relatively forgiving climb, not unlike my favorite long ride route here in Portland, Highway 30. The upgrade grew steeper slowly, until the question really became, "Would it be better to dismount and jog?" For about 4 miles, it was like riding up Marquam Hill via the VA Hospital. As we reached the snowline and kept going up, I was able to reflect on the beauty of the ride, but as on most of my training rides I saw a lot more macadam than scenery. After slogging along at 4 miles an hour, at last I saw the summit, a clearly defined ridge where the road opened up into a four-lane highway and I knew this was why I was here.

As my speedometer slowly ramped up to 20, 25, 30, 35 and finally to the magic number 37, my previous fastest speed, "Late in the Evening" by Paul Simon suddenly popped into my head and I sang all the way down the mountain as my speedometer finally settled on 42 and stayed there for about twenty seconds. I didn't even attempt to peddle as I straddled the thrill/terror threshold, with thoughts of instant death briefly interrupting the song.

Fortunately, the downhill on the course was every bit as far as the uphill had been and I was able to hold average speeds that exceeded my high speeds during the months of training. There is no comparison between riding a closed course on a fantastic route to white-knuckling it in the bike lane as semis roar by. I don't think I would attempt the Highway 40/46 ride around Mt. Bachelor on a normal day with vacationers driving land yachts in bad moods.

The run after the bike was anti-climactic, but the second I crossed the finish line I knew I would be back, *had* to be back next year. And who knows, with an improved doggy paddle, a stronger uphill cadence, and a quicker trot, I could be among the top 500 finishers in the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Pacific Crest half-ironman.



Tommy Thompson, secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services spoke at a conference called 'Obesity and the Built Environment' earlier this year, urging public health advocates to convince city planners to make exercise more accessible in the cities and suburbs of the U.S. His approach would save millions of lives and help thousands of U.S. citizens slim down through programs facilitated by cities and corporations to increase obesity awareness and allow everyone a time and place for exercise. He also believes health insurance companies should offer discounts to individuals who take action to improve their health in the same way auto insurance companies offer discounts to good drivers. He declared, "Every road being built - you should be able to walk on it or ride a bike on it...It helps the economy, attracts tourists, and makes people healthy."

For more information, go to: <http://www.hhs.gov/>

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## Tips When Beginning a Bike Commute

If you have considered riding your bike to work, but are not sure how to get started, here are some tips on how to do it.

### Planning Your Route Ahead of Time

Plan your commute route ahead of time at the City of Portland Department of Transportation webpage: <http://www.trans.ci.portland.or.us/bicycles/bicyclemaps.htm>.

If you have questions about any part of your route to OHSU, you can send a general query to [bike@ohsu.edu](mailto:bike@ohsu.edu), as it is likely that another bicycle commuter has to travel from your direction and can give you tips about how to get through a nasty intersection.

### Equipping Your Bicycle for Commuting

- ✘ By using a rear rack and panniers or a basket, you won't have to wear a backpack, which can cause more perspiration.
- ✘ Fenders can protect you from mud that splashes up from rain puddles during or after rain.
- ✘ A white headlamp and a red rear blinking light will improve your visibility at night.
- ✘ Carrying a basic tool kit, tire patch kit and tire pump will come in handy for unexpected roadside repairs.

### Bicycle Safety Guidelines

- ✘ Wear a bicycle helmet.
- ✘ Wear bright clothing during the daytime.
- ✘ Keep a safe distance from parked cars, watch for opening car doors.
- ✘ Use extra caution when it is raining, and allow extra time to stop.
- ✘ Cross railroad tracks at a right angle.
- ✘ Keep your bike properly maintained so it is safe.
- ✘ Ride defensively.
- ✘ Be alert for road hazards.
- ✘ Watch for cars at cross streets and driveways.
- ✘ Use lights at night.
- ✘ Keep your bike in good condition.
- ✘ Be aware of parked cars and watch for car doors that may open.
- ✘ Stop at stop signs and red lights.
- ✘ Ride predictably in a straight line without a lot of sudden movements.
- ✘ This will keep you on track and not startle motorists passing you.

- ✘ Obey all traffic signals and use hand signals to indicate your intention to turn or stop.
- ✘ Letting drivers accurately predict what you are going to do next will keep you safer on the road.
- ✘ Ride in the direction of traffic, passing when necessary on the left.
- ✘ Ride to the right if you are moving slower than other traffic, unless you are turning left, passing another bicycle or vehicle, or avoiding hazards.
- ✘ Establish eye contact with motorists so they know you see them, but more important, so you know they can see you.



### Obese Youth: First Generation to Die Before Parents

It's a strange, strange world when infants are dying from diseases related to obesity. The Royal London Hospital in the U.K. runs an obesity program to help obese children and has reported that a three-year old recently died of a heart attack. The obesity epidemic has spread to children at an alarming rate. The obesity program has only been open for three years, but already has an 11-month waiting list.

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Dr. Wyndham Boobier of the University of Glamorgan spends much of his time touring on an outreach campaign to educate parents, students, and food producers of the severe health dangers related to obesity. Obesity leads to degenerative and preventable illnesses such as heart disease, adult-onset diabetes, and strokes.

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He promotes a healthy lifestyle that includes whole foods and exercise but goes the extra mile by advocating against advertisements that promote 'healthy' and 'fun' processed foods. He would like to see such advertising relegated to the wee hours of the morning to protect children from the onslaught of convenience and fast food ads. During his tour, he discovered a school that has dramatically reduced behavioral problems by removing all additives from school meals.

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He believes that communities that actively change the way they view and consume food are key in the fight against the obesity epidemic. He realizes that radical change is difficult, but vital. In his words, "Obesity is a killer and we need a revolution in the way we live if we are serious about salvaging the health of a generation."

Source: □

[http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm\\_objectid=14282476&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=academic-attacks-flabby-attitude-to-new-killer-disease-of-obesity-name\\_page.html](http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm_objectid=14282476&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=academic-attacks-flabby-attitude-to-new-killer-disease-of-obesity-name_page.html)

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### Senate Conferees Press House to Adopt \$318B TEA-21 Level

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From Centerlines->

According to an article in the July 1st issue of the Surface Transportation Policy Project's Transfer newsletter, "House and Senate conferees working on a TEA-21 renewal plan met for the second time June 23, where Senators voted 17-1 to offer the Senate's \$318 billion funding level to their House counterparts. The Senate action was intended to prompt a conference committee agreement on surface transportation funding over the six-year renewal period.

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"After voting to officially convey the Senate offer, Conference Chair and Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe immediately advised the House conferees that the conference committee would meet July 7, when the House conferees would be expected to act on the Senate's funding offer. This third meeting of the conferees, occurring just after Congress returns from the Independence Day

Holiday, is now believed to be the key milestone in the process. If the conferees can agree on a funding level, the conferees are expected to continue working on a six-year bill. Absent an agreement, it is likely the conferees will abandon their efforts this year and move to extend TEA-21 into next year ... While several House transportation committee leaders welcomed the Senate's offer, other conferees, House leaders and the White House have lined up against the \$318 billion level..."

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For more information, go to STPP's website at:

[http://www.transact.org/transfer/trans04/7\\_01.asp](http://www.transact.org/transfer/trans04/7_01.asp)

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The BCG views cycling as an environmentally sustainable and healthy method of transport, we advocate incentive programs that reward people who cycle or use other forms of alternative transportation. Please forward this letter to friends or colleagues who might be interested in bicycling or preventive medicine. Visit us at the links below:

Bike Commuters Group: <http://www.ohsu.edu/bike/>

BCG online forum: <http://ozone.ohsu.edu/Scripts/ikonboard/forums.cgi?forum=21>