

## Looking for the perfect commute

Excerpted from: <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/10/20/foreman.commuting/index.html>  
*Tom Foreman, journalist at CNN, decided to do just that. He tried three modes, SUV, train, and bike. Here is what he had to say about bike commuting:*

With gasoline prices soaring, commuters nationwide are seeking alternatives to paying through the nose at the pump. SUV sales are down, bicycle sales are up, and mass transit systems are seeing a mass influx of passengers.

So I set out this week to explore three popular commuting alternatives to my 10-mile trip from suburban Bethesda, Maryland, to the CNN office near Capitol Hill in Washington...

...Given the high cost of gasoline these days, bicycles are getting new attention from commuters everywhere. I discovered that this week as I pedaled down a tree-lined trail popular with Washington's bike commuters, like Lynne Mavracic.

When a mechanic told Mavracic last February that she needed a new car, she decided she didn't need a car at all. She started riding her bicycle everywhere. Eight months later, with no gas bills, parking fees or car insurance, she has saved \$6,000.

"It was a serious adjustment at first," Mavracic said as she leaned against her shiny, black and purple bike, "because you get in the mind-set of jumping into your car, and it takes only 5 minutes to get to the grocery store."

But the storm of traffic found in most urban areas can make cycling intimidating.

The latest federal transportation bill, however, contains about \$4.5 billion over the next five years for bike and walking trails and education programs for riders and drivers. Also, many towns and cities across the United States already have taken steps to make it easier to commute by bike, according to Elizabeth Preston of the advocacy group League of American Bicyclists.

"So now, when you're mad and don't want to pay the fuel prices, you can go out and start bike commuting, and you'll be amazed at the infrastructure that's there waiting for you," she said.

That doesn't mean biking is for everyone. You have to live within biking distance — usually a few miles — of work and along a bicycle-friendly route. You may need to have a shower available at the office. You'll have to carry extra clothing, and that almost certainly means buying extra gear for your bike. You also may need a new bike, too.

The rewards, though, are huge: exercise, no more traffic-related stress and unbelievable monetary savings.

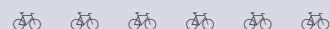
For me, it works out like this: If I bike to work every day for two months, I will save at least \$1000.

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

from [www.shift2bikes.org](http://www.shift2bikes.org) listserv:

**"The bicycle is such a marvelous machine. It makes you relaxed and healthy, not stressed and anxious. When's the last time you saw a bicyclist yelling at the bicyclist in front of him at a just-turned-to-green intersection traffic light to, 'Hurry up and go, idiot!'"**

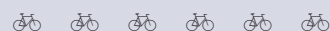
**Robert Ward, of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10/17/2005**



## Watch Your Knees!

Climbing Marquam Hill will take its toll on your knees if you aren't careful. Here are a few links with information about biking and knees.

- <http://www.bicyclesource.com/body/pain/knee-pain.shtml>
- <http://www.physsportsmed.com/issues/2004/0404/asplund.htm>
- [http://www.active.com/story.cfm?story\\_id=8629](http://www.active.com/story.cfm?story_id=8629)



## Finally! A Use for Discarded Bike Chains

Worn out bike chain, a common waste product of bicycle repair, is getting a second chance at life thanks to a new recycling program sponsored by Resource Revival. The company, which repurposes the chain to make functional and decorative home décor items, is offering free chain pick up at cycling shops in 10 Western states. The effort will help save shop owners disposal costs and keep recyclable parts out of local landfills.

<http://www.resourcerevival.com>

## Benefits of Bicycling Outweigh Risk

Excerpted from <http://www.grist.org/advice/ask/2005/09/28/bicycling/index.html?source=daily> 28 Sep 2005 (Dear Umbra is column in Grist Magazine where readers can ask questions about sustainability and other issues.)

Dear Umbra,

My question regards my daily half-hour (each way) bicycle commute through fairly heavy city traffic. I've been wondering if the benefits (exercise, sunshine, free and fast transport) are outweighed by the negatives (primarily breathing in diesel and other exhaust, but I'd also throw in the risk of almost getting run over, despite the cheap thrills)... Perhaps you could comment on the personal and environmental health effects of different types of commutes.

Indie, Washington, D.C.

Dearest Indie,

...You have two questions here. The first is whether you are hurting your health by biking in traffic. The second is a health comparison between the bike and other modes.

Clearly, biking not only maintains but improves your general physical health, in terms of muscles and heart rate and mental peace, and has little impact on the environment. It beats motorized vehicles... of all types on both these counts.

Being near or in traffic has an impact on our health and the environment, no matter what vehicle we choose. Chemicals and particulate matter flow from car and bus and taxi engines and into the mini-weather system of the traffic zone. These nasties include carbon monoxide, the BTEX volatile organic compounds (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene), and nitrogen oxides. Yummy.

The nasties are densest at the middle of the traffic zone, and less intense on the edges. So, to put it simply, the position of your lungs is key. Of course, there are many variables for air-pollution scientists to play with, and each situation is different, and so on — but, basically, studies show you get the biggest hit of the nasties when you're inside a car... occupants are very close to sucking on the tailpipe of the [car] just ahead of them. In a bus, riders' lungs are a bit above these sources. And bikers and pedestrians are on the outskirts.

...Pollutants in the subway tunnel are fairly equivalent to bus pollutants, so I will extrapolate that biking wins over all mechanized transport. And that, very briefly, is the answer to both your questions. While you may be hurting your health by biking in urban traffic, you are not hurting it as badly as you could be.

Pantingly,  
Umbra

SURE! \*CYCLISTS HAVE A RIGHT TO THE ROAD TOO, YOU NOISY, POLLUTING, INCONSIDERATE MANIACS! I HOPE GAS GOES UP TO EIGHT BUCKS A GALLON!\*



## Recommended Reading

*The Urban Cycling Manual* dismantles the urban bicycling experience and slides it under the microscope, piece by piece. The book's primary concern is safety, but this book goes well beyond the usual tips and how-to, diving in to the realms of history, psychology, sociology, and economics. It empowers readers with the Big Picture of urban cycling—and gives urban cyclists many useful insights to consider while pedaling the next commute or grocery run.

<http://www.powells.com/biblio?PID=7169&cgi=product&isbn=0762727837>



## Bike Commuting in Portland

Thursday, November 3rd, 6:00-7:30 PM

Mt. Tabor Sports, 5941 SE Division

Have you thought of commuting by bike but aren't sure what to wear or how to prepare? Want some tips on how to effectively manage riding in the rain & dark, so you can stay on the bike all winter? Unsure of how to find the best routes? Come join us for an interactive class as some bike commuting veterans share their knowledge, and a local shopowner talks about some of the simple gear you can use to keep your commute safe, fun, & dry.

For more information, contact Jeff Smith: <mailto:jeff.smith@pdxtrans.org> or 503.823.7083

## OHSU Commuters Rank #11 in BCC

Bikers in September's Bike Commute Challenge biked more than 580,000 miles – enough to make it to the moon and back, with a detour for a donut (on Venus). Find out who won, and where the other competitors ranked:

[http://www.bikecommutechallenge.com/bcc05/2005\\_results](http://www.bikecommutechallenge.com/bcc05/2005_results)

### Bikes on the Web

BikeTalk airs on KDRT, 101.5 fm in Davis, California, the bicycle capital of the U.S.

<http://biketalkradio.com/index.html>

Washington bike map online

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/Maps.htm>

Recycled bikes get a new life as furniture

<http://www.bikefurniture.com/>

Bicycle advocates raise awareness of dangerous areas in Seattle, WA and Portland, OR

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

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



## KBOO Bike Show

Wednesday, November 2, 9:00 - 10:00 am

Join Ayleen, Sara and their guests on the first Wednesday of every month for a live broadcast covering various bicycling topics at 90.7 FM or [www.kboo.fm](http://www.kboo.fm). This month Sara will spin tales of her bike travels and critical mass experiences in New York City, Moscow (Russia), and Barcelona. They will also highlight smart winter gear that doesn't have to cost a fortune.

Contact: [Ayleen@riseup.net](mailto:Ayleen@riseup.net)

## Neighborhood Opportunities

### Northwest Neighborhood Coalition Seeks Transportation Committee Members

Interested volunteers are being sought as committee members for the NWDA Transportation Committee. Committee members must live or work in NW Portland, within the boundaries of NW Cornell and Willamette Heights to the West; NW Vaughn St. to the North; NW 16th to the East; and Burnside to the South.

Those interested in keeping NW Portland a great place to live and work, and make it even better for bicyclists and pedestrians are encouraged to get involved! Contact Kim Carlson at <mailto:WEST2830@msn.com> or Mike Radway at <mailto:radway@teleport.com>. The committee meets the second Wednesday each month at 6:00 PM at the NWDA office at NW 22<sup>nd</sup> and Raleigh St.

### Help Shape the Future of Trails at Smith and Bybee Lakes

Please attend the Metro Council work session (600 NE Grand Avenue) on the Smith and Bybee Lakes Trails Study on November 9th. Mark your calendar for Metro Council hearing on Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. The councilors will consider a variety of alternative trail locations that could potentially complete the Columbia Slough Trail between Kelley Point Park and Portland International Raceway. A link to the St. Johns neighborhood and Pier Park via the St. Johns Landfill is also being considered. The study can be found at <http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=12960>. Updates on Metro Council agenda can be found at [http://calendar.metro-region.org/dsp\\_details.cfm?event\\_id=15692](http://calendar.metro-region.org/dsp_details.cfm?event_id=15692)

**BIKE TO WORK!**



**The Bike Commuters 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](mailto:bike@ohsu.edu) or visit our website at [www.ohsu.edu/bike/](http://www.ohsu.edu/bike/).**