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Wreck of the Old 97 *

Wednesday, April 05, 2006

More Good News

The bike commuters were out in droves yesterday afternoon all along my North/South route. About two miles in I hooked up with Mike who, heading due north, rides pretty much right past my house. I'm stoked to ride with other folks, even if my lollygagging self has a hard time keeping up. And I'm so happy to see the grass turning green, buds coming in on the trees and folks walking around in shorts. I'll be bringing mine out for the ride home today.

I found some [more news](#) regarding the shutdown of [Cycles Gaansari](#). It seems not so much that CG is moving to the west coast so much as Gary and Jean are moving on to other pursuits. A lack of desired working capital and orders for the house bikes clearly has driven the business decision to shelve the Gaansari brands and close the retail business. But Gary's deep interest in marketing / public relations and service outreach, especially in [Rwanda](#), is the other part of the equation. Gary started [Wheels of Mercy](#) with Tom Ritchey last year and plans to administer all public relations for them, as well and [Ritchey](#) and [Synchros](#) brands from the SF bay area.

posted by Jon at 1:42 PM | [Comment](#)

Useful Cycling Links

- [All About Bicycling in Minneapolis](#)
- [Google Maps Pedometer](#)
- [Bike Whenever](#)
- [Bicycling Street Smarts](#)

Cycling Related Web Sites

- [Sheldon Brown knows his bicycles](#)
- [Ken Kifer RIP](#)

The Cycling Blogosphere

- [Bicyclo II](#)
- [Nathan's Blog](#)
- [MyBikeBlog.net](#)
- [Cornerstone Life](#)
- [Kent Peterson's Bike Blog](#)

Monday, March 27, 2006

Profile, baby!

A year ago, the idea of commuting by bicycle through any sort of winter was just plain crazy to me.

Commuting under clear skies in warm weather sounded nice, but I never gave [OIFS](#) and [First Last and Always](#) blogs and think "now there go some folks with more stamina than brains. There gonna freeze their asses."

Looking back, I was actually getting inspired, and soon convinced my wife my few health problems would not be aggravated by the ride and I started commuting by bike in June of last year. After getting lost and being very late to work on that first day and after being really fucking tired for a few weeks, I realized quickly that I liked it. A lot. The whole experience changed my outlook and before I knew it, I was cautiously telling my wife that would at least try to bike through the winter. Who says surfing the web only inspires lethargy.



Nine months later, I've biked to work as many as four times per week and as few as twice per week, but I probably averaged three times per week - at least since the thanksgiving holiday. It's a triumph for me. I'm really hoping that I can stick with it this spring and summer and get my average up to four times per week, even with traveling. Friends, family and co workers still make funny remarks, but at least they don't actively try to talk me out of it.

So as a celebration of sorts and to replace some parts pretty much done in by the snow and the salt and 21 years, I put some fresh wheels on (built by [Jim](#)), replete with a cassette freehub (we're in the 90's now, Ethel), a new rear derailleur and chain. I gave the bike a good cleaning and finally took the studded Nokians off for the season. Even took a picture of it and stuff. As other folks have notioned, this is a sure fire way to get another six inches of late March slush any day now. winter bike commuting a serious thought. In particular I'd read the

posted by Jon at 1:42 PM | [Comment](#)

Friday, March 17, 2006

Those Forward Thinking Europeans

I awoke at 3:45 this morning to the cries of the five yo: "my ear...it hurts!" Having been visited by the ear infection fairy he wasn't going back to sleep. He writhed in a fair amount of pain through most of the morning until we could get him to the doctor and some more potent drugs those we had around the house.

The early rising made me pretty damn grumpy as I slogged it to work on the bike. I yelled at the UPS man for parking in the bike lane 15 ft. after the sign told him not to. Then I got really mouthy with an operator of late model BMW who failed to yield as I clearly signaled and tried to merge. He must have been in a hurry to get to the red light and listen to me complain, I guess. It was a nice exchange though; even though he did threaten me, not a curse was spoken or rude gesture exchanged. The breakthroughs are coming almost daily.

So this seems as good a time as any to point out that [Cyclicious](#) posted a link to the lovely Bicycle Facility

- [Greg's Soapbox and Therapy Couch](#)
- [A Flower Called Nowhere](#)
- [The Blasphemous Bicycler](#)
- [Car R Coffins](#)
- [Cleverchimp Blog](#)
- [Gundog99](#)
- [First, Last and Always](#)
- [They call it Mello Velo](#)
- [Minus Car](#)
- [Oil is for Sissies](#)
- [Two Cities, Two Wheels](#)
- [Cycler's Life](#)
- [VelociPete](#)
- [The Oldbag](#)
- [Big Ring Circus](#)
- [Bikecentric](#)
- [Crazy Biker Chick](#)
- [Lunatic Biker](#)
- [Up in Alaska](#)
- [Cycle Dog](#)
- [Lady Velo](#)
- [Ugly Bike](#)
- [Den of Ackwardness](#)
- [Bicycles and Bathrooms](#)
- [Dave Dash](#)
- [The Daily Spirit-Human](#)
- [Heather and David's Blog](#)
- [Ramblings of a Sometimes Sober Drunk](#)
- [Look Ma, No Hands](#)
- [Bike Minnesota](#)
- [Ajiva](#)
- [Hell Nation](#)
- [the Impossible Thrill](#)
- [Smithers Minneapolis](#)
- [And So Forth - Journal](#)

Trusted Suppliers

- [Rivendell Bicycle Works](#)
- [Cycles Gaansari - Dayton, Ohio](#)
- [Wallingford Bicycle Products](#)

of the Month page a few days ago. Run by the Warrington Cycle Campaign in the UK, these guys running this page mix advocacy with high comedy. So in the spirit of a Grumpy St. Patty's Day Friday, put a smirk on your face and just [enjoy](#).

posted by Jon at 2:15 PM | [Comment](#)

Monday, March 06, 2006

Gary, We Hardly Knew Ye

One sometimes amusing, sometimes annoying personality quirk of our 11 yo is that she hates any change and so hordes everything that enters her life, no matter how seemingly insignificant. My wife and I joke periodically that even oldgum wrappers, games no longer played and pants long since outgrown have a special place in her heart. Certainly, they all have find a place in her bedroom - mostly on the floor.

But so it goes with us as adults as well. We get comfy. We develop relationships with people. And if you're unlucky enough to have my social skills, you spend a few years getting to know someone. And than the music starts again and people get up and move on. I just hate it when that happens.



So I am really bummed to see that Gary Boulanger of Cycles Gaansari fame, the only decent bike shop in my former home of SW Ohio (yes, Greg, better than [I-Pro](#)), will be [closing](#) down the retail operation and moving on to circle the wagons in the San Francisco bay area. Can you really blame them on the move? The physical operations in suburban SW Ohio was never doing the same amount of business as the mail order and web stuff. Customers came not from Columbus or Springboro, but all around the country and world. And they were buying house brand bikes in droves. Walk-in service sales just weren't gonna pay the bills, so a business decision had to made. Fudge.

I can see that day to day operations stuff for a neighborhood bike shop is a real struggle. It's pretty clear that nobody starts a shop with the idea of using hundred dollar bills as TP. The owners I've met and respected, the ones I trust with my business, clearly do it for love. Gary was doing it for love as well. Why else put up with all the BS? When CG were located in the downtown Dayton area, drunken vegabonds would wonder in from the bars in the middle of the freaking day to drink their coffee or customer's bikes would get stolen from the racks out back while they milling around in the shop. In the burbs, I think it became clear that the overhead for a retail space just wasn't worth the hassle and the house bike brands were really what was selling and doing so pretty much sight unseen.

It's probably a pretty unique metro area that can support a local brick and mortar operation on the order of a CG. I'm feeling pretty lucky these days to live in a city that can support independent shops on the order of [Hiawatha](#) and I'm happy to spend my wife's hard earned money with them. My guess is that the Metro Dayton area still has a little maturing to do before a local bike shop geared towards non-racers (not that there is anything wrong with racers) can really survive there. Still, I hope CG left enough of a mark on some young Daytonian pup with lotsa operating capitol, that the bug will take hold and the sucka open a dedicated neighborhood bike shop in the Dayton area that stays in the Dayton area.

posted by Jon at 4:04 PM | [Comment](#)



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