



Published by

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

2121 Broadway, Room 204, New York, NY 10023

(212) 866-7489

February/March 1987

NEW WEST SIDE BIKE PATH IN WORKS

Change of Heart by Governor Needed

A task force appointed by New York Gov. Mario Cuomo to forge a transportation plan for Manhattan's West Side has proposed a five-mile continuous bike path running along the Hudson River from the Battery at Manhattan's southern tip to 59th Street. However, plans for the bike path, an adjacent pedestrian path and a surrounding park are jeopardized by opposition from the governor. Action by bicyclists and other open space advocates is needed to secure the site for public and recreational use instead of private real estate development.

The park, or esplanade as it is frequently called, would be built adjacent to a new six-lane road that would replace the elevated West Side Highway demolished in the 1970s. The road and park would substitute for the Westway highway project which Gov. Cuomo and Mayor Koch withdrew in 1985 in the face of scandals, high costs and public opposition.

The West Side Task Force's unanimous inclusion of separate bike and pedestrian paths in its January 8 recommendations to the governor was a victory for New York area bicyclists. Transportation Alternatives had campaigned for a bike path as a safe and esthetic corridor linking uptown and downtown and enabling recreational and commuting cyclists to bypass midtown traffic.

However, the victory may have been temporary. Gov. Cuomo's criticism of the esplanade has cast doubt on plans for the bike path. And since the task force regarded the esplanade as a "critical element" in the overall road design, the governor's criticism has placed the proposed road itself in doubt.

The highway recommended by the task force, though not as massive as the discarded Westway scheme, would include elaborate tunnels to keep traffic moving at four key cross streets. This would boost its cost to an estimated \$700 to \$800 million, absorbing virtually all of the federal "trade-in" money not already committed to other uses.

The panel thus ignored proposals by mass

transit advocates for a modest, \$100 to \$200 million boulevard-style road that would discourage motor traffic and free up the trade-in funds for subway improvements. But despite slighting mass transit, the task force embraced the esplanade with continuous and fully-separated bike and pedestrian paths.

Gov. Cuomo's repudiation of the esplanade within hours of the task force's release of its recommendations surprised the panel. He characterized the \$100 million esplanade as an extravagance that would steal funds from more pressing needs, such as moderate-income housing and better subways. The argument struck many political observers as bizarre; not only is housing ineligible for Westway trade-in money, but it is the \$800 million road, and not the \$100 million esplanade, that would soak up the urgently needed subway funds.

As of this writing, it's not clear whether the governor's criticism of the esplanade was fully thought out or just shooting from the hip. Opposition to the park would serve the powerful real-estate interests seeking to reserve the riverfront for luxury housing. The 60-acre esplanade site between the proposed roadway and the river is prime land for development in the manner of Battery Park City and other condo/

(continued on page 5)

INSIDE

TA Director's Report	p. 2
Bike Traffic Update	p. 3
The "In-Between" Bicycle	p. 4
BOOK REVIEW: Pedaling The Ends Of The Earth	p. 5

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Gail Boorstein

Our much-anticipated meeting with New York City's Transportation Commissioner took place just before Thanksgiving. Half-a-dozen bike activists were invited to meet with Ross Sandler and other DOT and City officials last November 25. A complete rundown of the meeting is available from TA.

Highlights include Comm. Sandler's affirmation of commitment to bicycling in New York City and his interest in enhancing bicycle parking and making other low-cost improvements to bicycling conditions, such as safety education. Future meetings are anticipated at three-month intervals.

Many specifics were discussed, including the Queensboro bridge, traffic enforcement and sewer grates. TA presented a "want list" of measures to improve the quality and quantity of cycling in NYC. DOT Deputy Comm. David Gurin gave a thorough presentation of what's been done in NYC for bicycles in the last ten years. It's a long list.

We left the Commissioner's office with the impression that if we organize and exert strong, creative pressure on the City administration, Comm. Sandler will be ready to help. Of course, if Mayor Koch keeps getting sacks of letters complaining about unsafe bicyclists, the merits of our case won't get us far.

My guess is that the Mayor still likes bicycles. Maybe it's time for a public action exorcising the debacle of the Sixth Avenue bikelane. Any ideas? Letters in support of bicycle transportation to Mayor Koch, City Hall, New York 10007 would be a good start. Send copies to TA.

TA testified before the City Council Consumer Affairs Committee against Intro 520, a bill to require all bicycles sold in NYC to be equipped with a bell, brake, light and reflectors.

Representatives of the NYC Depts. of Transportation, Consumer Affairs and Police also testified against the bill. Reflectors and bells are already required under Federal and State law, as are lights after dark. The difference is that current statutes require the equipment for bicycles in operation, not at time of purchase.

Two days later, on December 17, TA appeared at a rally protesting the death of Peggy Ryan, a Midtown office worker who died last October after being struck by a bicycle messenger who apparently ran a light. Our message, in part, was to appeal to advocates of pedestrian safety to focus on motor vehicles -- they kill 750 pedestrians every year in New York City (!). Ms. Ryan's death, though tragic and inexcusable, was the first of a pedestrian struck by a bicycle in two years.

At the demonstration, TA talked with Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins, who spoke of creating a "Planning for Pedestrians Council" to bring together

bicyclists, pedestrians and others to work toward responsible street sharing in NYC.

Unfortunately, the several NYC Council members present seemed less interested in constructive action than in garnering publicity through bike-bashing. More depressing still, riding up Sixth Ave. afterwards in mid-afternoon, was the rodeo of messengers charging through pedestrians and motor traffic without a shred of civility, much less observance of law.

Seven TA members participated in a pre-Christmas brainstorming session on bicycle parking. We covered on-street parking, garages, and office buildings, ranging through available hardware and possible incentives and regulations. We're hoping to survey Midtown office buildings with an eye toward parking obstacles and opportunities. Any TA members with survey expertise and an hour or two to help frame our research are encouraged to call.

TA Meetings take place every three weeks on Monday nights in SoHo, at 7 PM. If you are interested in participating or keeping up with hot bike issues, call 212/866-7489 for the next meeting date. We have interesting discussions about bike politics and possibilities. Bikes are welcome inside.

Or, if you can contribute a few hours a month you can help to make a big improvement in NYC bicycling. Want to improve your bike parking or work on a safety campaign? Would you be TA's liaison to your bike store? Please call the above number.

Our new brochure is finally approaching the printing stage. Thanks to all of you who are waiting to distribute them, they're on the way.

Wondering about the t-shirt you ordered, was it as long as a year ago? We haven't forgotten and we appreciate your patience. If you want your money back, let us know, otherwise we expect to be able to print the shirts, new design, before summer.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

PRESIDENT: Charles Komanoff
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Gail Boorstein

Transportation Alternatives is a non-profit association of New Yorkers dedicated to advancing bicycles as a legitimate form of transportation.

CITY CYCLIST

EDITOR: Charles Komanoff
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Louis Avitabile
PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS: Ed Ravin, Dan Sherr

City Cyclist is published bi-monthly. Articles, photos, letters and artwork are welcome and appreciated.

BIKE TRAFFIC UPDATE

Reflective vests are especially useful this dark time of year. Knowing for sure that you're visible is well worth the expense.

Reconstruction of the north upper roadway of the Queensboro Bridge begins in mid-February and will extend into most of 1989. This will be followed by reconstruction of the main lower roadway, probably starting in 1990 and also requiring several years. The bad news is that once again, the bike lane will be closed, probably from 6 AM to noon, although a final determination on the hours hasn't been made. The good news is that DOT's two trailers and vans will be back to carry cyclists and their bicycles across the bridge. The shuttle service will run every 15 minutes, depending on traffic. As in the past, signs on the bridge will provide information.

Riders on the Brooklyn Bridge report more and more of the bike/pedestrian path



being walled off for use by construction workers. The project underway, complete replacement of bridge cables, will also continue for several years. Encroachment on the path is the alternative to closing it for the duration.

Thanks to DOT and TA members who reported the problem, the police cars that block the Sixth Avenue bikelane at 35th St. during rush hours will alter their parking habits to keep our lane clear. Presently-invisible sections of the lane will reappear around March when the weather gets warm enough to thermoplast. And, when the repaving of Sixth Avenue, originally scheduled for 1986, finally occurs in 1988, the 4-foot bikelane will be widened by 8 inches.

Police ticketing of bicycle traffic violators is down but by no means out. Last summer, the Police Midtown Traffic Unit, the

prime Manhattan strike force on bicycles south of 66th St., deployed ten officers who issued almost 1,200 summonses per month. Since last October, with cooler weather and extra gridlock duty, the force has been cut to three and the monthly ticket rate is down to 400.

Standard m.o. is to hide a parked squad car behind a large truck and collar any errant cyclist, whether s/he runs the red light at 15 mph or merely "slides" through at 3 mph. Sixth Ave., especially in the 30s, is a prime spot.

Beware of ticketing by precinct police as well. One cyclist got two \$45 tickets from a 13th Pct officer at 6 Ave. and 16th St. early on a Sunday morning -- one for running the light, the other for having no bell. (She's contesting the second ticket at her hearing in April.) Another caller reports ticketing of slow, non-messenger riders on Broadway at 24th St., alongside Madison Square.

One member reports snow blockage of the Triboro Bridge path last winter. She found herself covered with greasy black dirt from walking around and over the mounds of snow. Triboro Bridge and Tunnel Authority workers shovel snow onto the path to clear the way for motorists. If it snows this winter, be warned.

Our Executive Director spotted many middle-aged ladies shopping by bicycle on the Upper West Side in January. She reminds women who may feel unsafe walking along Riverside Drive after dark that it's less scary by bicycle, and the naked elm trees are wonderful.

DOT Commissioner Sandler wants to know where the 6th Ave. and Broadway bikelanes are chronically blocked by double-parked vehicles. Send us the specifics -- dates, hours and places -- and we'll pass them on. Ditto for unsafe sewer grates.

When a utility rips up pavement they're supposed to repair it. DOT likes to enforce its regulations which subject the offending utility to fines as well as to correcting the problems they've left. To report a road cut call TA or DOT's Bicycle Coordinator Larry Reilly at 566-3960.

Don't breathe when you're behind a bus. This warning comes from Eric Goldstein, air quality expert for the Natural Resources Defense Council. Diesel emissions include minute particles which lodge in the lungs and are perhaps the most harmful (to humans) aspect of air pollution remaining unregulated.

PC TYPING NEEDED

Can you contribute an evening or two to improving TA's networking capabilities and expanding the distribution of City Cyclist by typing addresses into our computer? Our computer is in a SoHo office with a nice view; or, if you have an IBM-PC or compatible you could work from your home or office. Please call TA at 212/866-7489.

President's Corner

THE IN-BETWEEN BICYCLE

by Charles Komanoff

When conditions are right, we bicyclists enjoy the best of all possible worlds for getting around New York. Biking combines the range of a motor vehicle with the connection to the environment afforded by walking. We cyclists marvel at how nimbly we travel around town, and we wonder why the throngs queued up for buses or vainly hailing taxis aren't riding bikes instead.

But as most City cyclists know by now, these are not the best of times for bike riders. The police crackdown punishes us for failing to obey laws designed for vehicles, while drivers and pedestrians habitually endanger us by abridging our right-of-way. We seem to have been given the responsibility of vehicles but few of the rights.

This perception was driven home on a balmy January day, when TA member Pryor Dodge and I were taken on a tour of the Garment District by Charles Campisi, the police captain in charge of the 100-man Manhattan Traffic Area. The erudite and energetic Capt. Campisi, a participant in TA's interview of the police in the Dec./Jan. City Cyclist, is point man in the Koch Administration's campaign to stamp out dangerous cycling in congested lower and midtown Manhattan.

As Pryor and I watched, Capt. Campisi counted roughly 8 of every 10 cyclists riding through red lights, whereas less than 2 percent of motorists did the same. The proportion of law-breaking motorists was less than the city-wide average, perhaps due to the lazy, spring-like weather or the low traffic volume. And, miraculously, the usual taxicabs illegally stopping for fares in mid-avenue were nowhere to be seen. Still, the difference between cyclists' and motorists' adherence to the law was stark and undeniable.

But behind these numbers, there were other things to observe that underscored the beleaguered status of bicyclists in New York City. Capt. Campisi's count of traffic violators included a cyclist who had proceeded hesitantly, almost unwillingly, through a red light so that he could safely skirt a truck double-parked on the next block. Jaywalking pedestrians forced several bicyclists to brake and weave through the intersection, but the captain allowed that the sheer number of jaywalkers and the minimal \$2 fine make enforcement impractical. He sympathized when a pedestrian crossing with the green became marooned between one truck blocking the crosswalk and another turning sharply into her path, but these offenses weren't serious

enough to warrant ticketing. However, no such leniency was extended to a bicycle messenger who meandered through a red light and was collared for a \$45 ticket by an officer in Capt. Campisi's command.

This is not to malign the captain, who duly noted the difficulties of biking in Manhattan, and is as professional in carrying out his traffic enforcement duties as is his look-alike, New York Mets star Keith Hernandez, in patrolling first base at Shea Stadium. Rather, the point is that bicyclists are increasingly squeezed between law enforcement that makes us toe the line, and the disinclination of many street users to observe our right-of-way.

To most non-cyclists, and even some cyclists, the solution is for bike riders to strictly obey traffic laws. I'm not convinced this is always fair, or practical. Passing through red lights isn't only done selfishly, to make time. Frequently it's the cyclist's way of evening the odds. Like the bike rider who stopped at the red light but proceeded again after he saw that his lane was blocked, many of us pass through lights to maintain the speed and the distance from vehicles that we need for safety. Until conditions change so that cyclists feel they are safest when they obey the law, many bike riders will feel a necessity to "slide through" the law.

This is not to condone cyclists who ram through red lights or ride the wrong way, or those who, even at slow speeds, obstruct motorists' or pedestrians' right-of-way. We cyclists owe it to ourselves and the community at large to discourage and eventually eliminate such behavior. In particular, messengers, who are disproportionately responsible for antisocial cycling, need to be motivated to clean up their act. A crackdown may be one way to do it, but a more enduring solution may lie in upgrading messengers' social and economic status through the kinds of organizing tactics outlined by TA member Carl Hultberg in the Dec./Jan. City Cyclist.

Meanwhile, Pryor and I hope to take Capt. Campisi on a cycling tour of Midtown (a bit of red tape to unravel first). What he sees aboard a bicycle won't change the law, but it might influence the police force's view of us and our interactions with other street users. We'll keep you posted.

LOOKING AHEAD TO .. GEAR '87 LONG ISLAND

July 17 to 20 are the dates. Bike the famous Hamptons, pedal out to the fabulous Montauk Lighthouse, or simply laze on the beach.. Rides vary in length and difficulty. For details on the weekend, send your name and address and a SASE to: Gear '87 Long Island, P.O. Box 7159, Hicksville, NY 11802.

BOOK REVIEW by Stephen Harnik

Pedaling the Ends of the Earth

by David Duncan

(Simon & Schuster, 266 pp. \$17.95)

On December 1, 1981, four young men, wearing World Bike for HOPE T-shirts, flew from Washington's National Airport for Madrid, to begin a 14,000-mile, 14-month bike odyssey around the world. The adventure, planned as a type of super bike-a-thon to raise money for Project HOPE, the health care foundation, turned out to be more an exercise in sheer survival than a charity drive.

The four were Duncan, 23, the author, then a recent Vassar graduate (who at the time he conceived the trip didn't even own a bike); his younger brother, Don, 21; Jim Logan, 31, whose principal reason for going was bird-watching; and David French, 33, the director of American Youth Hostels in Washington, D.C.

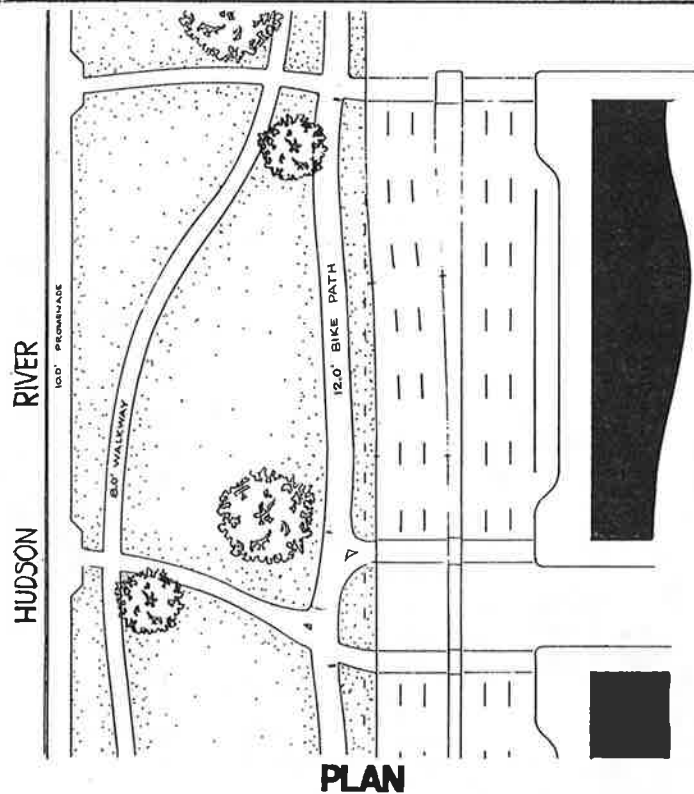
The book chronicles the group's experi-

ences as they bicycle over the Himalayas and the Rockies, through sandstorms and typhoons, enduring dysentery, broken bones, and extremes of temperature ranging from 125 degrees F in the Sinai desert to 7 degrees F along the icy roads of Virginia. For much of the trip either there is no water or it is so foul that it must be boiled or treated with triple doses of iodine for drinking.

While cycling through Egypt they are robbed by swarms of rock-throwing desert urchins who can only be kept at bay with a bull whip. In Pakistan and India they must beware of lions, wild dogs and scorpions. Across the deserts water must be carried, increasing their bikes' weight to over 120 lbs, and when the wind blows and the roads become thick with sand the bulky bikes have to be pushed.

Bicycling through Thailand, where the roads are bordered on either side by land mines, they are forced to ditch their bikes and dive for cover when a helicopter gunship strafes insurgent troops hiding in the

(continued on page 6)



PLAN

SECTION
LOOKING NORTH

Drawing from The Parks Council's "Open Space Alternative" -- a conceptual design for the new West Side Highway and Esplanade with separated bicycle and pedestrian paths.

(continued from page 1)

office complexes along the Hudson and East Rivers. The developers would also offer to underwrite new parks attached to their complexes -- no continuous bike path, of course -- in exchange for permission to construct lucrative high rises on platforms or landfill extending into the Hudson.

Seen in this light, the battle for a West Side bikeway is part of the ongoing struggle between real estate interests and their political allies, apparently including the governor, versus community interests such as open space users and bicyclists.

Action is needed now by supporters of human-scale, public recreation and transportation, including bicycling and mass transit. Gov. Cuomo, Mayor Koch, State legislators and City Council members must be told that the public wants an inexpensive, boulevard-type road and a fully-funded esplanade with separate, unobstructed bicycle and pedestrian paths.

The issue transcends Manhattan boundaries, not only because of what a five-mile West Side bike path would mean to city-wide bicycle transportation, but because of the importance of trade-in funds to the subway system. The governor particularly should be urged to choose a modest road as a way to fund both the esplanade -- and its bike and pedestrian paths -- and mass transit.

For several years in the mid-1970s, bicyclists and other New Yorkers enjoyed a fabulous "free space" when the old West Side Highway was condemned and closed to motor traffic. Until the highway was demolished, New Yorkers from all over bicycled and strolled its five-mile length, free from the intrusions of cars and trucks -- the lordly Hudson on one side and spectacular Manhattan on the other. Now we have a second chance. It's worth fighting for.

(continued from page 5)

surrounding jungle.

By the time the group reaches Southeast Asia it has been reduced by half. Dave French had dropped out in the Sudan, and Don Duncan had been flown home from Bangkok acutely ill from a rare strain of salmonella. The chapter titles are themselves clues to the hardship: "Indian Hell," "Land of Monsoons," "Pacific Doldrums." The group had to avoid some countries as too dangerous (Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Afghanistan); in others, upon arrival, they are told that cycling through is not permitted (China and Burma). Sometimes the problem is no roads. In Borneo, for example, they are forced to take a river boat when the road they are traveling turns to jungle.

Bicycling through Japan just before the home stretch, Duncan and Logan meet a Japanese bicyclist who informs them of his own plan to bicycle around the world. Their conversation is indicative of their mood by that time.

"Around the whole world?" I asked.

"Yes, I take five years, go 60,000 miles."

"That's incredible," I said.

"How can we talk you out of it?" said Jim.

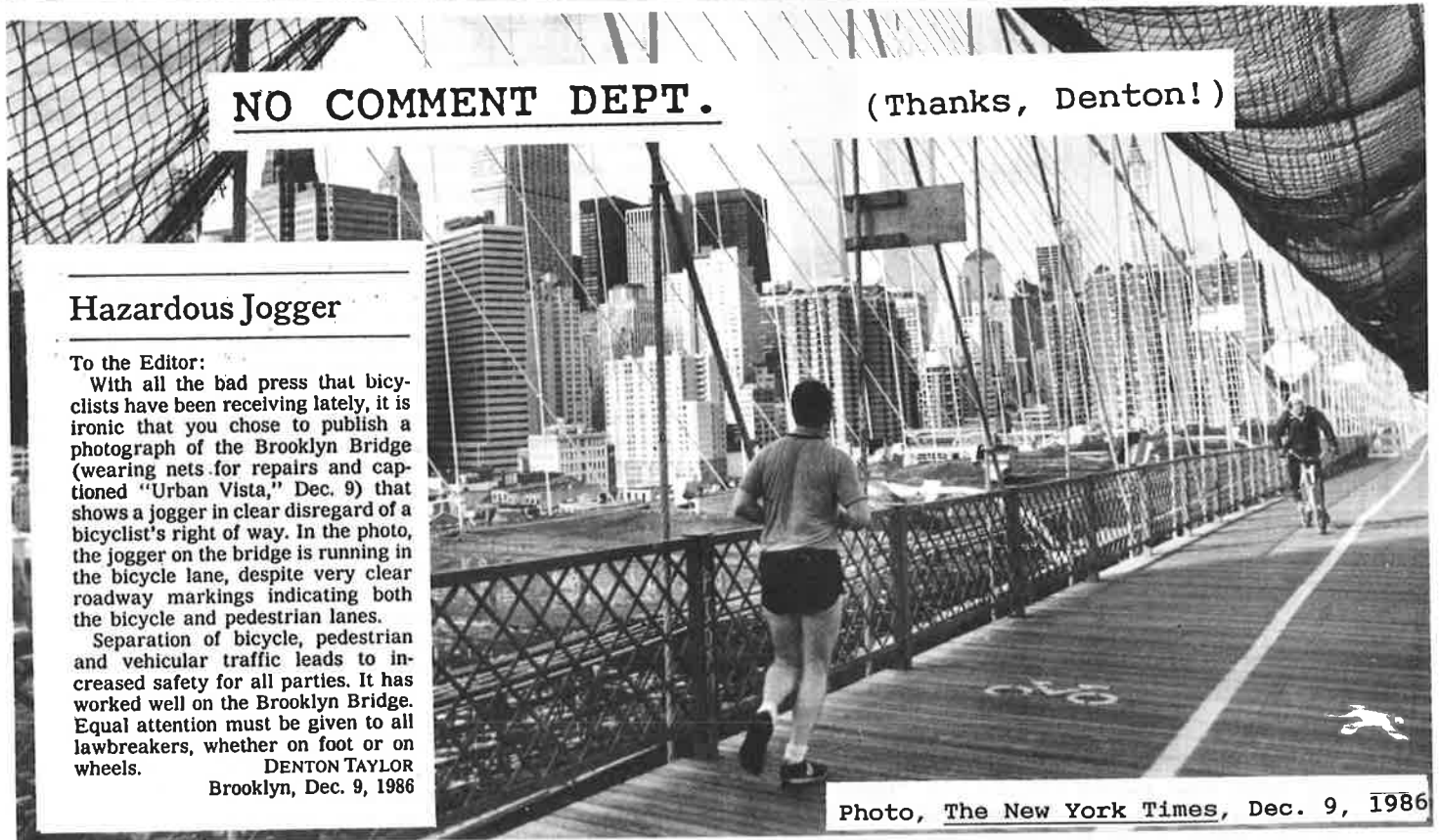
When Duncan and Logan reach San Francisco to begin the last leg of the journey back to Washington, D.C. the author finds himself "in a dark, angry mood." He is particularly disturbed by an anti-nuclear film that a

group of rich Californians invite him to view while he is en route through Santa Monica. The film, narrated by astronaut Buzz Aldrin, began by telling the audience that the earth, as viewed from a spacecraft, was one world without lines marking countries, race or conflict, a world with "no frames and no boundaries." The gist of the movie, Duncan says, was that if the threat of nuclear war could be eliminated, there could be world peace, prosperity and happiness. Duncan calls the movie "ridiculous":

"[Had] these wealthy people talking about grand solutions to problems they didn't understand ... seen India? Did they realize the horror and misery of a place like Uttar Pradesh?"

It is not really made clear why Duncan is so "angry" at the end of the trip. Was it, perhaps, the more than 400 flat tires suffered during the journey? In any event, it is that anger that apparently spurs him to compare, for no reason really, his goals and those of Project Hope, with the equally valid goals of the anti-nuclear movement.

Duncan's method of travel, surely one of the most intimate, becomes almost incidental to his original purpose. Pedaling the globe, Duncan learns as much about himself and his homeland as he does about the rest of the world.



NO COMMENT DEPT.

(Thanks, Denton!)

Hazardous Jogger

To the Editor:

With all the bad press that bicyclists have been receiving lately, it is ironic that you chose to publish a photograph of the Brooklyn Bridge (wearing nets for repairs and captioned "Urban Vista," Dec. 9) that shows a jogger in clear disregard of a bicyclist's right of way. In the photo, the jogger on the bridge is running in the bicycle lane, despite very clear roadway markings indicating both the bicycle and pedestrian lanes.

Separation of bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular traffic leads to increased safety for all parties. It has worked well on the Brooklyn Bridge. Equal attention must be given to all lawbreakers, whether on foot or on wheels.

DENTON TAYLOR
Brooklyn, Dec. 9, 1986

Photo, The New York Times, Dec. 9, 1986

BIKE RIDES

(Courtesy, Appalachian Mountain Club)

Fri. Mar. 6. Bike Maintenance Workshop.
Learn parts, tools, trouble shooting.
10-speed oriented. \$5 fee includes AMC
Biking Booklet. Register in advance. Gary
Meyer, 212-928-4187. 6:30 PM, 920 Riverside
Dr. Apt. 7, 162/163rd Sts. A or No.1 trains.

Sat. Mar. 7. Bike Workout. 15-50 miles.
Training ride thru Bronx/Westchester. 15
mile loop with hills of varying grade and
length. Meet 11:30 AM, 242nd St./Bway
station, No. 1 line. Lunch after at River-
dale Diner. Bring lock. Inclement weather
cancels. Jeremy Herman, 212-543-6472.

Sun. Mar. 15. East Side, West Side 20 miles.
All around Manhattan Isle. Meet at Tramway,
59th St./2nd Ave., 10:30 AM. Moderate pace.
Return via Riverside Drive to 72nd St. and
Central Pk. W. Ample time to sample the
exotic products of the region. Bernie
Brosk, call 9-5 PM, 212-736-2764.

Sat. Mar. 21. Bike Workout. 15-50 miles.
See write-up for Sat., March 7 above.

Sun. Mar. 22. From the Plum to Allison Park.
25 miles. Meet 10:30 AM Maxwell's Plum (1st
Ave./E. 64th St.) cycle Central Park, River-
side Dr., and GWB to picnic spot with lovely
Hudson views. Level terrain, moderate pace.
Bring lunch. Inclement weather cancels.
Hindy and Amanda Schachter, 212-758-5738.

Sun. Mar 29. Great Falls. 55 miles. Brisk
pace. Heavy rain or snow cancels. Bring
sketch pad. Start 8:30 AM, coffee shop, E.
16th St./Park Ave. So., or Central Pk. Boat-
house at 9:15. Chas. Morris, 212-477-3281.

Wed. Apr. 1. Wednesday Biker. Brisk pace.
Routes and mileage vary. Call Tuesday night
or early Wed. to confirm start. Meet 8 AM
E. 16th St./Park Ave. So., or 8:50 Central
Pk. Boathouse. Chas. Morris, 212-477-3281.

Sat. Apr. 4. Queens Parks. 20 miles. Enjoy
an almost flat ride thru the parks and quiet
streets of Queens. Buy plants on return.
Meet 11 AM, 111 St. lot near Science Ctr.
(Look for the rockets!) No. 7 to 111th St.,
exit right on 111th, pedal to lot. Jennifer
Sonsini, 212-654-0388.

Sun. Apr. 5. Picnic on the Beach at Nyack.
50 miles, brisk pace. Over GWB, up the
Hudson. Meet 10 AM Maxwell's Plum (1st Ave./
E. 64th St.). Bring/buy lunch. Inclement
weather cancels. Irv Schachter 212-758-5738.

SPECIAL PREVIEW:

Sun. Apr 26. 11th Annual Five-Boro Bike
Tour. 35 miles. Join thousands for the
country's largest cycling event. Register
with American Youth Hostels, 212-431-7100.

I would like to support Transportation Alternatives:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Occupation _____

Phone: h _____ w _____

Annual Membership Options:

- New Renewal
 \$15 Individual
 \$25 Dual (2 people at same address)
 \$45 Supporting
 \$100 Sustaining
 \$7.50 Student, Sr. Citizen, Low Income

I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____

- I would like a Brooklyn Bike Map (free to
supporting and sustaining members)
\$3.00 + 50¢ postage \$ _____

Total Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please describe yourself as a bicyclist:

- Commuter Messenger
 Recreational Touring
 Utilitarian Competitive

Here are my concerns, comments, ideas:

We could use your help. Please check the boxes or
call TA at 212/866-7489:

- Artwork/Cartoons Legal
 Attend hearings, Letterwriting
meetings Newsletter
 Bike maintenance Publicity
 Clerical/Computer Rallies/Leafletting
 Fund raising/
Membership Other _____
 Leading bike rides

Please make check payable and send to:

Transportation Alternatives

2121 Broadway (Rm. 204)

New York, NY 10023

212/866-7489

Your contribution, including membership, is tax-deductible.

LETTERS

Dear TA:

I've been a TA member for several years, and, although I'm on a temporary sabbatical from New York, I've kept up my membership to keep up on cycling news.

So I must admit that I've viewed the controversy of the police crackdown on cyclists from a distance, even though I still feel involved because I commuted to work by bike for years in NYC. And Carl Hurtberg's column ("Cycling to Safety," Dec. - Jan. City Cyclist) really aroused some mixed feelings.

Although I agree with his overall safety message, I disagree when he describes messengers as the "vanguard of the bike movement." This is a rather rosy-hued view, and it seems overly naive. I have a lot of sympathy for the problems of messengers. They work on a piecemeal basis in what are essentially sweatshops of the street that constantly threaten their health and safety. Even though these are burning issues in their own right, it is just as true that many messengers have as much contempt for the road rights of other cyclists as motorists do. This is not what I would call political consciousness.

And as far as the rights of pedestrians are concerned, I think they deserve more respect than Carl gives them. Many people would take issue with a view that holds that victims of hit-and-run accidents are casualties of some romanticized social struggle, as Carl implies. The answers to these problems are hard to come by, but I think we need to come to a consensus that rises above this level or we will become, like our adversaries, just another narrow special interest group.

Hey, I know how easy it is to fall into the "road warrior" macho mentality when trying to deal with the pressures of riding in traffic. It's frustrating riding a bike in the city -- indeed, to try to get from one place to another by any means of transportation! Ironically, what I used to like about riding in the city was that, in a

way, I was attempting to take exception to the macho games that motorists go through, by taking a "peaceful" mode of transportation.

Sincerely,

David Solet
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Dear TA:

I'm an old (well, middle-aged) TA member, and have been bike-commuting for about 6 years -- Long Island City to Manhattan via the 59th St. Bridge.

Congratulations, City Cyclist continues to be informative and your dedication to this good fight, inspiring.

Re your bridge-updates, there was nothing on the 59th St. Bridge; I live in dread of a final banning of bikers (and walkers) with or without that shuttle-van the DOT instituted a couple of years ago (it was horrendous, but it did keep us riding). Please keep us informed. [Ed. Note: See Bike Traffic Update, this issue.]

Yes, I too have been ticketed (wrong-way off the 59th St. Bridge to Second Avenue), but truthfully I did not feel I'd been harrassed -- I'd gotten away with it for years, but we should obey the traffic rules.

Would you elaborate on the "passive wind-operated device" used as a warning bell for pedestrians, does it exist, where can one get it? [Ed. Note: Article slated for next issue.]

I did not receive any recruiting brochures, but I'd be willing to distribute them (I did a few years ago, for ex-president Janet Weinberg, when we were in danger of losing the bridge lane); I can give them out on the bridge and in three bike shops in Long Island City. Send me 100.

Sincerely,

Mort Garchik
Long Island City

Transportation Alternatives
2121 Broadway (Rm. 204)
New York, NY 10023
(212) 866-7489

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York, N.Y.
Permit No. 1098



To:

EDWARD RAVIN 6525
3847 ORLOFF AVE
BRONX NY 10463