



### BUSH SEEKS TO ELIMINATE 1 IN 3 CAR TRIPS

“Don’t buy gas if you don’t need it.”  
 – George Bush, *San Jose Mercury News*, Sept. 2, 2005

“One-third of all car trips are under 3 miles.”  
 – US Census; *Santa Cruz City Master Transportation Study*

# PEOPLE POWER!

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# PEOPLE POWER! UPDATE

SANTA CRUZ CYCLING NEWS

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## Santa Cruz Night Out

In the ongoing struggle for public space, the Coalition for Community Commons has shown that careful, patient advocacy and having a good time can get the job done.

The discussion around closing the Pacific Garden Mall to cars has been going on at least since the 1989 earthquake, when the issue was hotly debated by Vision Santa Cruz, a community round table discussion on how to rebuild the downtown. Leaders in the business community were scared of the idea, and the city council, faced with the real prospect of a permanent economic disaster, decided that the time was not right to push the idea forward. According to Vision Santa Cruz participant, Mayor Mike Rotkin, “We designed it in a way that portions of the mall could be closed in the future. Our hope was that we could demonstrate to the businesses that closing sections was actually an advantage to them rather than trying to force the issue by fiat. That’s where Santa Cruz Night Out fits in perfectly.” (Source: *People Power* interview with Mike Rotkin, 9/3/05.)

In the late nineties, petitioning efforts to force the mall to close were met with heavy resistance by downtown businesses, organized by the Downtown Association. The problem with using a petition drive or similar tactic to install a pedestrian mall is that pedestrian malls succeed in large part due to the participation



*Naturally, a vision of utopia includes a lot of plants. September 6th was Garden Night on Pacific Avenue with Santa Cruz Night Out, which, of course, included our bicycling gardener friends at Terra Nova Ecological Landscaping.*

of businesses comprising the mall. A pedestrian mall put in against the wishes of the business community could be “sabotaged” and fail due to a lack of cooperation, even with a good plan and in a strong economic environment.

Enter People Power members Greg Kindig, John Fisher and the folks at the Coalition for Community Commons. Their idea for a Santa Cruz Night Out as a considerate and fun move toward community common space in downtown Santa Cruz (continued on page 5)

## Protecting the Less Traveled Path at Oceanview

When it comes to human-scale transportation, it is often the small paths that are the most important. We simple bipedals prefer an alternative infrastructure to the one frequented by those dangerous hurtling coffins known as automobiles. Unfortunately, local governments in this country do not consider these paths a priority.

Consider the Oceanview Bike Path, a nice little connection between the river levee and South Branciforte. (To get to it, follow the east side of the San Lorenzo River levee to its southern end, cross East Cliff and look for a dirt trail that takes you to South Branciforte below Oceanview Park.)

The trail is officially on the property of the Oceanview Condominium Complex. The Condo Association, representing the owners in this complex are trying to gate off the path and control its use, beginning by closing it at night. They’ve been stopped, so far, by People Power members and other users of the path.

The path has been used by pedestrians and bicyclists for decades, and maintaining the path for public use and coastal access was a condition of the planning permit originally issued to the condo complex by the city. Instead of maintaining the path, the Condo Association placed a 6-foot-high wooden fence between the path and the condominiums, making the path dark and narrow, and cutting it off from the view of the condo residents. The decomposed granite path has not been maintained and is getting soft in places. As a result of the path’s isolation from view, homeless folks camp along the riparian zone of the creek to the right of the path. Some of them supposedly use drugs or engage in prostitution. The condo owners, understandably, don’t like them being there.

Several months ago, the Oceanview Condo Association filed a request with the city planning department to move the path (continued on page 5)

## MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear People Power Members,

Cheap oil is clearly reaching the end of its role as a cornerstone of the American empire. Current prices at the pump support predictions made by Richard Heinberg, M. King Hubbert, and others that the exponentially expanding demand for oil coupled with a slowly declining supply creates a fragile situation whereby a temporary problem—like the disaster in New Orleans—sends prices soaring. Chances are that when prices come down, gas will remain above \$3.00 a gallon. For those of us committed to more sensible transportation, that's something to celebrate.

There are very few communities in the United States that are better prepared for this than bicyclists in Santa Cruz County. In the next few months, while car owners throughout the country are waiting in line for gas, bicyclists and pedestrians in Santa Cruz will enjoy Bike to Work Day, Santa Cruz Night Out, a Bicycle Film Fest, and the celebration of the permanent Beach Street Bicycle Facility. The Bike Church Repair Center is in full swing, as is Pedaler's Express. The newly resurfaced guerrilla rail trail creates a connection from the West Cliff/Beach Street/levee system to Brommer and destinations to the east. In addition, a peak oil discussion group is active and holding events. (Contact Mary at 464-8664 to get involved).

People Power is committed to making sure that our bicycle and pedestrian transport infrastructures get better, not worse. Every little path like Oceanview is worth protecting and bigger projects are on their way. Though we aren't happy with how long it is taking, Soquel Bike Lanes are scheduled for next year. Farther down the pike, as long as People Power keeps up the pressure, extensions to the river levee path system and pedestrian bridges over Highway 1 in midcounty are viable. And we are continuing our intense lobbying for the purchase of the railroad corridor so that we can get on with building the rail trail. We have a lot of work ahead of us, and a lot of reasons to celebrate.

Speaking of celebrations, I got married. (Yes, there is more to life than bicycle advocacy and, yes, bicycle advocacy can be part of life.) With the support of Akiko, my new bride, we had a more or less car-free wedding on a farm 25 miles north of Santa Cruz. Thirty people joined us the day before in hiking to the wedding from Big Basin and camping out. A dozen rode in by bicycle and over a hundred guests took buses from downtown that we chartered for the event. As members of a shared vision of a human-scale world, you were all there with us in spirit. (Don't send any kitchenware.)

In community,



Micah Posner  
People Power Director

## People Power Offers Valet Bike Parking

Santa Cruz is a great place for events, fairs, and festivals. Unfortunately many of those events haven't had particularly good places to park bikes. Until now...



*Derek Williams, Valet Bike Parker par excellence, insures a safe parking experience for an unknown bicyclist. Later on, he'll be invited to get involved with People Power.*

As of May 22nd, People Power offers valet bike parking at events. Valet bike parking means that you can ride to an event and leave your bike with a People Power volunteer who will park and watch it within an enclosed environment. A claim ticket is stapled to the bike and given to the owner to ensure that only you claim your bike.

Besides making it easier for people to get around without cars, valet parking is a great opportunity to share information about People Power, our projects and our goals. During valet parking we sign up members, take donations, and, because so many cyclists don't have them, sell lights.

People Power members Gary Milburn and Derek Williams have worked with other volunteers to get this program going and make it a success. So far, we have parked bikes at 3 events during bike week last May and four of the Santa Cruz Night Out Events (thanks in part to a grant to do so by the Spokesman bicycle shop). Valet parking has been a great success. Thank you Derek, Gary and all of our other awesome volunteers!!!!

We will be parking bikes at the UCSC Farm's Harvest Festival on October 8th and could use some volunteers. If you want to help out you can get into the festival for free. Call the office at 425-0665 and sign up to work for a couple hours.

Our inspiration for valet bike parking came from Growing Cycles (which parks bikes at the Santa Cruz Farmer's Market), as well as the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. In San Francisco, large events are *required* to provide valet bike parking by the city. Hmmmm, there's an idea... ■

## Oceanview

*(continued from front page)*

closer to the creek and install lawn where the current path is, as a way of eliminating places where people can hide. Doing this, of course, would also eliminate the riparian habitat. The Planning Department, concerned about the riparian corridor, discouraged the condo owners from doing this and, instead, suggested that they open up the path to public scrutiny by tearing down the big wooden fence and installing a see-through metal fence. The Association said that they would do so, but only if they could install gates on the path and control access. Planner Don Lauritson originally agreed that the path could be closed at night and the deal was scheduled for a routine meeting of the Zoning Administrator.

Luckily, several neighbors who use the path read the posted public notice. One neighbor—an active People Power member— notified our office, as well as everyone else he could think of. We sent out an action email alert and several dozen emails were sent to planning staff. The Coastal Commission was contacted. In July, the issue was taken off the zoning administrator's desk and put on the agendas of the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission and, ultimately, the City Council.

On August 3rd, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to turn down the request to limit access to the path.

Commissioner Kaitilin Gaffney told People Power, "It is a issue of precedent. We say in our general plan that we want to maintain these pathways and have more of them. These paths contribute to quality of life. They build community. You run into the people from your neighborhood and get to know them in a way that you can't do in a car. This is a small path but each path is important as part of that broader connection."

The Oceanview Homeowner Association responded by erecting the fence (sans gate) without a permit. It was red-tagged as illegal by the same planners that had crafted the deal to begin with.

While People Power members and supporters have so far kept this path open, the decision ultimately is up to the city council, who allowed another development to close a gate at Kennan Street several years ago. In the ongoing fight for public space, an unsupervised city council has been known to allow money to trump other considerations.

We need to get involved and stay involved to protect our public trails from privatization. To lend your support come to the Transportation Commission Meeting on Wednesday, September 14th at 7PM, the City Council on Tuesday, September 27th. OR send a letter or email: (809 Center St, Santa Cruz, 95060, <citycouncil@ci.santa-cruz.ca.us>). Then CC a copy to People Power. ■

## December 13th – a day for celebration!

### Beach St. Lanes Complete

The Beach Street bike lanes are going permanent and should be finished by the end of November. The fancy new facility that's halfway between a bike path and a bike lane will really say "maybe you'd rather RIDE!!!"

Even though the design is not perfect and has taken a long time to actually get out to bid, putting in a contra-flow bike lane on one of the city's most important arterial is a BIG DEAL. We think it's also an excellent reason to celebrate, AND a great time to thank the Public Works Department for doing something useful.

So... at 4PM on December 13, People Power will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Mayor (and People Power member) Mike Rotkin. The event will be held on the Boardwalk, next to the Ideal Grill.

### People Power Fundraiser at Gabriella Cafe

After the ribbon-cutting, we will roll on down to Gabriella Cafe at 910 Cedar Street in Santa Cruz for a celebration and fundraising dinner from 5:30–7:30PM.

Half of all proceeds from the dinner will go to People Power. Many thanks to Gabriella Cafe for their generosity.

Tickets for the dinner are \$20–30 (sliding scale) in advance, and \$30–40 at the door. Drinks are not included with ticket.

To purchase tickets or to volunteer to help out, call the People Power office at 425-0665. Valet Bike Parking will be available at both events.



### Web Site v 3.0

The People Power website is undergoing another upgrade and will go live in October! The new and improved site will be updated on a more frequent basis with news and events. It will also allow people to donate and/or join online. Thanks to volunteer Steve Piercy for his dedication and hard work in getting the new version of the site up and running. <www.peoplepowersc.org>.

## Santa Cruz Night Out

(continued from front page)

is now in its third successful summer run. Santa Cruz Night Out (SCNO) started with 3 events in the summer of 2003 and this year expanded to 9 events on Tuesdays from 5:30-8:00 in August and September. Santa Cruz Night Out brings more people downtown on a traditionally “slow business night” and makes the downtown area more of a community space by organizing interesting and fun happenings. All performers and event organizers operate as volunteers making for a true community feeling.

As organizer John Fisher puts it, “We originally went to the city and said, let’s see how it works. Now they know it works. We’re not doing nearly as much advertising as we did in the past. People are just coming out and enjoying it. It’s a place for people to be together and it’s sort of local entertainment. A lot of people come down with their little kids. It’s a safe place, where there are people around.” Mayor Rotkin agrees, “I think it is incredibly exciting. It’s an example of citizen initiative doing something the government should be doing if it had more funds and more imagination.”

Even the Downtown Association is getting on board. This year the Association gave the organizers advice and support which included loaning them a PA system. They also did their own street closure in an attempt to further draw people downtown on weekdays.

Unfortunately, raising money to pay the city fees that are required to put on the event—in addition to actually organizing volunteers to make these nights successful—is becoming a drag for the all-volunteer coalition. “We can’t just keep doing everything,” says Fisher, “Right now we have to get all this money for permits and then fill out all this paperwork to do something that is in the interests of the city and the downtown businesses—bring more people downtown. We’re hoping that they can get to a point of paying for it or waiving the fees for it. Our idea is to work with the city. For it to be truly successful, the city and the downtown businesses need to eventually take it over.”

It’s obvious that a pedestrian mall here in Santa Cruz would only attract more people, like it does in Santa Monica, or Boulder, Colorado. In the meantime a little taste of a human-scale Santa Cruz is available on Tuesday Nights from 5:30PM to 8:00PM. The way to get there is, of course, by bicycle. People Power will be doing valet parking at every event.

To help with valet parking or SC Night Out (this year or next) call 425-0665. For more info, <[www.santacruznightout.org](http://www.santacruznightout.org)>. ■

## THE LOOSE SCRUZ COURIER CHALLENGE

October 15-16, 2005  
Santa Cruz, CA



PedX, Santa Cruz’s only bike messenger company, is organizing the Loose Scruz Courier Challenge: a two-day-long series of cycling competitions and cultural events to celebrate bicycle messengering and to raise funds for the Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Transportation and the Bicycle Messenger Emergency Fund.

The centerpiece of the weekend will be the Courier Challenge, a points-based competition designed to test the skills of a cyclist in the realms most important to bicycle couriers: efficient routing, speed, negotiating traffic, attention to detail and thinking on one’s feet.

Plenty of entertainment, food and drink will accompany the Courier Challenge and the side events, so expect something for everyone, participants and spectators alike. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories.

For more details, including contact info, please visit the website at <[www.loosescruz.net](http://www.loosescruz.net)>.

## Going to Church



At the Bike Church people of all skill levels are encouraged to learn more about bicycle maintenance and increase their mechanical abilities while having fun and building community.

The Bike Church is in its eighth year of serving the biking community and continues to grow in vitality and scope, thanks to the volunteer efforts of more than a dozen core mechanics who keep the shop running Monday through Saturday, from 3–6PM.

During open hours, the shop itself spills over into the adjacent parking lot with several people working concurrently on their bikes. Staff mechanics give guidance, going between projects like a waitstaff during a busy lunch rush. People dig through the formidable drawers for parts, finding what they need to make their bike go. Groups of bicyclists arrive and depart. People greet one another, share tools, knowledge, stories, and enthusiasm.

The shop also hosts womens and transgendered peoples bicycle maintenance classes every other Saturday. Each week a class on a specific topic is taught by women or transgender mechanics. All skill levels are welcome and absolute beginners are encouraged to attend.

Working on bikes seems to be infectious. Most people who do a project once keep coming back with friends and housemates to build more bikes or to repair neglected ones. All of this means more bikes on the road, more savvy and technically adept cyclists and—maybe most importantly—a multi-dimensional culture of bike use: bicycles for transport, bicycles as a doorway to adventures and friendships, bicycles as personal art.

People who have been involved in the bike church have carried these ideas on to other towns and projects. Bike Church volunteers from Santa Cruz have started a Bike Church in Davis, helped run the Bike Kitchen in San Francisco, started a collectively owned bike shop, and run elementary school build-a-bike programs. They have also taken bikes that they built themselves from pieces at the shop and ridden them to every corner of the country and beyond, translating into real and direct advocacy for bicycling.

The Bike Church is located in the HUB at 224 Walnut Avenue in Santa Cruz, and is open from 3-7pm, Monday through Saturday. ■

## Fall 2005 BIKE TO WORK/SCHOOL DAY



Thursday, October 6th, is the 7th annual Fall Bike to Work/School Day in Santa Cruz County. Free breakfast for cyclists from 6:30AM 'til 9:30AM will be available at specified locations.

Also, an Urban Bicycle Skills class will be offered though the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department. The class is on Saturday, October 8th from 10AM–2PM, and includes an on-bike section. There is a small fee but you get some cool bike stuff.

For more information, call 423-9569. ■

## SC Bicycle Film Festival at the Guerrilla Ride-In

In conjunction with the Santa Cruz Guerrilla Drive-in, on Friday, October 21, People Power will show a series of films on Critical Mass and cycling culture. Meet at Fair Ave. and the railroad tracks on the westside of Santa Cruz. Films start at 8:00PM.

The Guerrilla Drive-in is an outdoor movie screening that springs up along train tracks and under bridges. It’s a movement that reclaims public space and transforms industrial wasteland into places where people can gather and have fun. Of course, when it’s People Power putting on the show it’s a Ride-In and valet bike parking will be available. For more information go to <[www.thespoon.com/drivein](http://www.thespoon.com/drivein)>.

The featured film, *Still We Ride*, is a newly released documentary that chronicles the formation of Critical Mass and leads up to the mass arrests of cyclists that took place in New York in August 2004. Currently the film is on an international tour to bring awareness to the New York Critical Mass cause. Other films include animated shorts, documentaries on the bike messenger culture, and short films about the simple joy of riding a bike.

The event will be a joyous gathering and celebration of grassroots organizing and the urban cycling culture. Bring snacks, wine, chairs, blankets, and friends to enjoy the movie. Come join the Guerrilla Ride-in and make it a reality.

After the movies, the Santa Cruz Midnight Mystery Ride will take you and your friends on a rollicking after-hours tour of the bike ways and back lanes of our fair city. Leaving after the Guerilla Ride-in we’ll head down town to pick up more folks at midnight at the Poet and Patriot Bar. Where are we going? It’s a mystery! Only the leader for that week knows. The ride is 3–5 miles long, and always ends with an after hours party in nature, so bring a snack to share and pack your trash. Keep an eye out for special info from ride leaders at <[santacruz.indymedia.org/](http://santacruz.indymedia.org/)>.

There is a ride every other week, after Guerrilla Drive-in, always leaving from Poet and Patriot around midnight. ■