

# CYCLE THERAPY



SEPTEMBER 2007 NO. 107

## President's Report *Victoria: A League Bicycle-Friendly Community?*

by Darren Marr

For the past several years, Greater Victoria has proudly held the title of "Cycling Capital of Canada". Certainly, we have done a great many things in this town to earn that title. Victoria has the highest percentage of commuters in Canada who cycle to work (around 7%). Victoria also boasts a temperate climate which is conducive to bicycling year-round. The Galloping Goose and Lochside trails are internationally renowned bicycle routes which tourists flock to this city to ride on. World mountain biking champions Roland Green and Allison Sydor reside here. It was also in Victoria that the idea for Bike to Work Week originated, and where BikeSense, the first bicycle operators' safety manual in Canada, was first published. Both these concepts are now being exported and adopted in other communities across Canada.

Like many of you, I feel proud to be living in the Cycling Capital of Canada. I am also proud to be part of the one organization that helped make that distinction possible – the GVCC. In the 15 years of the GVCC's existence, Victoria has gone from

a place where cycling was an afterthought to a community where cycling is an accepted part of the West Coast lifestyle. Therefore, I feel it should be incumbent on the GVCC, as well as our local decision makers and fellow cycling supporters, to ensure that we hold onto this title, as other cities might plan to take our title away from us.

The question is, how can we do this? How do we know what we need to do to keep this distinction?

When the GVCC Board went through its strategic re-visioning exercise about 2 years ago, they came up with a vision about what kind of community they would like see from a cycling point of view. This vision, which is now the GVCC's strategic vision, is stated as follows:

*"To create an internationally recognized bicycle-friendly community where cycling is accepted and promoted as a preferred mainstream mode of transportation as well as an enjoyable recreational activity, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life in our community."*

Such a noble and lofty ideal, particularly in the face of climate change, obesity and inactivity in adults and children, rising fuel prices, and increasing urbanization and congestion on our roads. A vision which would surely be fitting for the Cycling Capital of Canada. However, what exactly constitutes an "internationally recognized bicycle-friendly community"? How could you measure what a bicycle-friendly community is, and what criteria is used to determine that?

Fortunately, an answer can be found from one of our affiliated organizations, the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). Since 2003, the League has been coordinating the "Bicycle-Friendly Communities" program which recognizes how effective a community supports cycling. Communities are evaluated on the basis of the "5 Es: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation/Planning". Those communities which score well are given one of 4 levels of recognition: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Since the program began, communities in the

see steps page 2



greater victoria cycling coalition

### general meeting

thursday, september 20, 2007

guest speaker professional bike fitter **barry lycett**

james bay new horizons, 234 menzies street

refreshments @ 7pm, meeting @ 7:30

**everyone welcome!**

plus: gvcc president darren marr will present a slide show on bicycle intermodal transport from victoria to portland titled ships, trains and bicycles

for more information, please call the gvcc office at 480-5155 or email at [gvcc@gvcc.bc.ca](mailto:gvcc@gvcc.bc.ca).



hi: you may have noticed that cycle therapy hasn't been coming out as often we'd like. we would like to publish cc on a regular basis, but we can't do it unless we have articles! if you would like to submit articles, would like to volunteer for distribution, or are interested in becoming part of the editorial team, please contact us! remember that this is your newsletter, and you can make it better.  
jason.

### inside

E & N Rail Trail  
Upcoming Rides

U.S. have been clamouring all over themselves to gain recognition under the program, with some improving their position by 1 or 2 levels.

In a recent discussion I had with Andy Clarke, the Executive Director of the LAB, Andy informs me he is interested in expanding the program into Canada, where he feels most Canadian cities should score quite high – at the silver and gold levels. With that notion in mind, I have identified the LAB defined criteria under the 5 Es so you can compare how Victoria measures up. (Activities already undertaken in Victoria are in parentheses.)

- 1.) Engineering and infrastructure
- Existence of a bicycle master plan
  - Well-designed bike lanes and bike paths (Galloping Goose/Lochside)
  - Properly signed greenways (Saanich)
  - Maintenance of road conditions
  - Availability and quality of secure bike parking. (Chain Chain Chain)

- 2.) Education
- Availability of cycle safety instruction programs (Bike to Work Week)
  - Cycling education for school children
  - Availability of bicycle safety information (BikeSense, bicycle map)
  - “Share the Road” awareness campaigns
  - Number of cycling instructors (Can-Bike or other) located in area

- 3.) Encouragement
- Special bike events (Bike to Work Week)
  - Clear route signage
  - Community bike rides (GVCC rides committee)
  - Projects aimed at children biking to school more often (Way to Go! Program)
  - Building new bicycle facilities (West-side Rail Trail)
  - Existence of local, active bicycle groups (GVCC, SIMBS).

- 4.) Enforcement
- Liaisons with law enforcement agencies (bike theft initiative)
  - Bicycle divisions within police agencies (Bike Squad, Tour de Rock)
  - Enforcement activities (helmet and lights crackdowns)

- Prohibitions of unsafe practices (side-walk riding is banned).

- 5.) Evaluation and planning
- Keeping cycling statistics (crash rates, percentage of commuters)
  - Identifying ways to improve current bike programs
  - Review and revision of bicycle master plan

While the above list is by no means exhaustive, the criteria listed tends to fairly represent a community dedicated to integrating cycling as part of its social and transportation fabric. In other words, a “bicycle-friendly community”. The list also reveals that Victoria is way ahead of the game with programs in place which meet many of the criteria established by the LAB. I would anticipate we would achieve a least a Bronze or Silver level based on our existing cycling initiatives. It should also be noted that cities designated as “Bicycle Friendly Communities” such as Portland OR, Tucson AZ, and San Francisco are well known for their healthy populations and sustainable livability, thus validating the connection between cycling and quality of life as outlined in our vision statement.

I feel it's time we gave serious consideration to demonstrating our worthiness of being the Cycling Capital of Canada by applying to become an LAB sanctioned “Bicycle-Friendly Community”. Achieving such a designation will give us the international recognition we have been seeking for Victoria's bicycle friendliness. Moreover, participation in the program will give us a benchmark on how successful our advocacy efforts are, what areas we need to improve on, and how Victoria compares to other communities in bicycle friendliness, so that we may be able to learn each others' best practices and act towards addressing any deficiencies.

However, this effort will take a lot of cooperation with many of our community partners, namely civic governments, law enforcement agencies, and other cycling associations in our area, as well as input from our own members. Fortunately, we have a fairly good working relationship with these groups, and our collaborative efforts in the past gave rise to many cycling initiatives which have already met

most of the LAB's qualifying criteria.

So what we have got to lose? Let's put our money where our mouths are, and apply to become the first Canadian city to achieve LAB “Bicycle Friendly Community” recognition. Let's show the rest of the country that Victoria really deserves to be called the Cycling Capital of Canada!

Until next time, keep the rubber side down!

Cheers,  
Darren

(If you wish to communicate further with me on this topic, please email me at [dmarr@gvcc.bc.ca](mailto:dmarr@gvcc.bc.ca).)

## CYCLE THERAPY

Published six times a year by the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (GVCC), #12 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1P7  
Phone (250) 480-5155

- The GVCC's purpose is to promote and improve conditions for cycling in Greater Victoria by:
- Improving cycling education and making it universal for cyclists, for motorists and others dealing with bicycling;
  - Facilitating communications between cyclists and government;
  - Improving facilities for bicycle use;
  - Improving the legal climate for cyclists;
  - Encouraging more people to ride bicycles more often;
  - Developing a cycling information base.

To contribute to Cycle Therapy, please e-mail: [jasonweedmark@hotmail.com](mailto:jasonweedmark@hotmail.com)  
(We reserve the right to edit copy in the interest of clarity or where necessary to conserve space.)

The views expressed in Cycle therapy are not necessarily those of the GVCC.

Visit our website: <http://www.gvcc.bc.ca>

To join the GVCC members email discussion group, send a blank message to: [gvcc-members-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:gvcc-members-subscribe@yahoo.com)

**Cycle Therapy Coordinator:** Jason Weedmark  
381-8172 [jasonweedmark@hotmail.com](mailto:jasonweedmark@hotmail.com)

**Website:** Greg Merkley [gmerkley@shaw.ca](mailto:gmerkley@shaw.ca)

GVCC Board of Directors  
President: Darren Marr  
Vice-president: Bill Birney  
Treasurer: Tim Isaak  
Secretary: Vacant!!!  
Director: James M. Grayson  
Director: Patrick O'Connor



The GVCC is a proud member of the British Columbia Cycling Coalition



## E&N Rail Trail Launched

photos by Bill Birney



Elder Joan Morris of the Songhees First Nation delivers a blessing to the attendees

## Upcoming GVCC Rides

**Saturday, September 15**

### ***Tour de Lac***

Starting at the East/West Shawnigan Lake Road junction at 10:30 a.m., cycle around Shawnigan Lake with a side trip to view the largest wooden rail trestle in Canada, plus ride part of the Trans Canada Trail along the West Side of Shawnigan Lake. The tour is approximately 35 km with a few hills.

**Sunday, September 23**

### ***Victoria's Secrets Tour***

New route this year! Ride in places where bikes can go but cars cannot on a 20 km ride. Meet at the GVCC Office (#12 Centennial Square) at 10 a.m.

**Saturday, October 27**

### ***Ghost Ride***

Back by popular demand! Come ride this easy 20 km night tour and learn about the spirits who live in some of the finest homes and castles of Victoria. Leaves at 6 p.m. from the GVCC Office (#12 Centennial Square). See note below regarding night rides.

**Saturday, December 15**

### ***Christmas Lights Ride***

A perennial family favourite, join us on a new night route, viewing colourful Christmas lights followed by refreshments. Leaves at 6:30 p.m. from the CNIB Building, 2340 Richmond Road (at Bay St.). See

note below regarding night rides.

Notes:

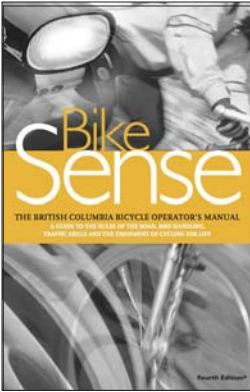
Participants must wear helmets and bicycles must be in good mechanical condition. Functioning front and rear lights are required for all night rides.

There will be rest stops but we recommend you bring water and food.

*All rides are by donation* (suggested donation \$5)

For further information call the GVCC at 480-5155 or view our website at: [www.gvcc.bc.ca](http://www.gvcc.bc.ca)

All dates, times and routes are subject to change



Pick up a copy of Bike Sense at your local bike shop or at the Sustainable Transportation Centre, #12 Centennial Square

gvcc agm  
thurs oct 18  
featured speaker  
todd littman  
from the victoria  
transport policy institute  
plus elections for board of directors  
refreshments 7pm, mtg 7:30



### Cycle Therapy Ad Rates

Multiple bookings save 25%  
Corporate members save 10%  
Combine multiple and corporate rates to save 33 %

Size	Single Issue	3 or more Issues
Business Card	\$ 40	\$ 30
Double Business Card	\$ 80	\$ 60
Quarter Page	\$ 160	\$ 120
Half Page	\$ 320	\$ 240
Full Page	\$ 640	\$ 480



The printing of Cycle Therapy was made possible by a contribution from Hillside Printing  
3050 Nanaimo Street, Victoria  
250-386-5542

## Join the GVCC

Your contributions will help us (and you) take a proactive approach to creating a more hospitable cycling environment in Greater Victoria.

As a member you will get:

- Cycle Therapy Newsletter: E-mailed to you and/or delivered to your door six times a year. Find out what's going on and who's involved.
- Better Cycling Facilities, sooner: Get involved or support those who are working to make our region more cyclist-friendly.

Join online at [www.gvcc.bc.ca/join.shtml](http://www.gvcc.bc.ca/join.shtml)

- \$20: Member (\$10 for students, seniors & the unemployed)
- \$35: Household
- \$50: Sponsoring
- \$100: Sustaining
- \$300: Life
- \$80: Corporate Member (eligible for 10% off all transactions with the GVCC. Please name corporation and designated voting member on this form).

Make cheques payable to the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition and mail to:  
#12 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P7

- Check Here if you would like to receive *Cycle Therapy* by e-mail
- Check Here if you would like to receive a hard copy of *Cycle Therapy*
- Check Here if you would like us to contact you about volunteering
- Check here to join the BC Cycling Coalition (\$5 per person. Details at [www.bccc.bc.ca](http://www.bccc.bc.ca))

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for your support