



April 2010 Bulletin

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"Prez Sez" April 2010

By **Derek Chu**, NYCC President

THOUGHTS OF SPRING

Submit!

Have you a hankering to express yourself in prose? Do you have a wealth of information to share with the NYCC membership? Have you just returned from some far-flung spot and wish to tell everyone about it? Submit! Submit!



"In the spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of...."
— Alfred Lord Tennyson

Ahhh, spring. A milder wind whistles through one's helmet, daylight graces the skies for a few more minutes, fewer layers of wicking clothes are worn, the sun warms the face and body, and the spring snow in Vermont is silky soft. Wait... SNOW?! Yes, I guiltily admit my torn loyalties – in the spring, my thoughts lightly turn first to the delights of spring skiing, then to cycling.

Every spring for the past five years, I balance my passion for skiing with NYCC's SIG and Club rides. While my disciplined urban cycling friends are out on the road building up their base fitness, I'm wondering, "Should I go spring skiing or shall I dust off the road bike?" This spring, I've sadly fallen behind on my cycling training.

This edition of the Club Bulletin contains the "NYCC 2009 Financial Report" (as required by the Club's by-laws), and we continue to focus on the theme of cycling advocacy with articles from Transit Alternatives and the BTCNJ. We also include an article about the process involved to create the sidewalk path from the George Washington Bridge to 'River Road' (a.k.a. Henry Hudson Drive).

APRIL 20TH CLUB MEETING

NYCC is proud and thrilled that Loren Mooney, the Editor in Chief of *Bicycling* magazine has accepted our invitation to speak. Ms. Mooney has a deep knowledge about all aspects of the cycling sport and industry, and was the ghost writer for an autobiography of Floyd Landis. Loren sent me an email sound bite, which clearly shows her journalistic and marketing flair: "If you want to make [the meeting] really juicy, we can make the topics: the Alpine police, Floyd Landis and me, and other cutting edge cycling world news." Sid's Bikes will also be on hand to preview cycling gear and offer prizes for a raffle.

NYCC STAN OLDAK YOUTH PROGRAM

The April Club meeting will also include a special presentation by the Stan Oldak Youth Program Committee (OYP). Stan Oldak, the beloved former President of NYCC, was killed in 2007 by an unknown driver while bicycling in Texas. The OYP will be making a special donation to "I Challenge Myself," an organization that uses fitness-based challenges and service learning to allow youth in low-income communities to develop physically, academically and socially.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

On April 1st, the 2009 NYCC membership expired. Folks who joined NYCC after September 26, 2009, will receive the 2010 login information and password for the members-only sections of the website. Contact Crystiina Avram, our hard-working Membership Director with questions: membership@nycc.org

NYCC BIKE ADVOCACY

On March 25th, NYCC convened and facilitated a small group meeting with local area bike clubs/organizations to address advocacy topics of mutual interest. Specifically, we discussed short-term actions and long-term planning options for safety improvements to the George Washington Bridge pedestrian/bike path(s), Route 9W in NJ/NY, and to Piermont Road (NJ Route 501/NY Route 340). Attending the meeting were representatives from NYCC, T.A. (Transit Alternatives), CRCA (Century Road Cycling Association), 5BBC (Five Borough Bike Club), and BTCNJ (Bike Touring Club of New Jersey). Together, this revitalized bike coalition represents over 13,000 (with some overlapping membership) cyclists and concerned citizens from the New York metropolitan area.

As a group, we decided and agreed upon a coherent and united plan of action – we will coordinate our actions, communications, and outreach to the NY/NJ Port Authority and local police in local towns such as Nyack and Piermont, NY. Stay tuned for more updates as NYCC, T.A., CRCA, 5BBC and BTCNJ work together to improve cycling safety on the GWB, Route 9W, and Piermont Road.

TRANSFORMATION INTO THE "NYCC DIAMOND"

NYCC continues to evolve as we approach 2011 – the Club's "Diamond Jubilee" or 75th Anniversary:

- Website Upgrade – In mid-March, a 12-page Request for Proposal (RFP) for the upgrade and redesign of the Club's website, NYCC.org, was sent to numerous vendors. Completed responses and bids to the RFP are due to the NYCC Board of Directors in early April. In mid-April, the Board of Directors will select one firm from two finalist vendors, and we expect that a contract will be signed by May 1.
- PayPal – The NYCC Web team is pleased to announce that the Club has enabled PayPal as the sole form of payment for the Sunday, May 30 group dinner in the Berkshires region of Massachusetts. [Click here](#) for information about the NYCC Berkshires Weekend.

NEEDED: VOLUNTEERS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

Please donate your time to NYCC. If you're in a SIG, we hope you will lead a ride or donate your time and skills to one of NYCC's Committees, including membership, content writing, Diamond Jubilee Gala, and others. Contact us with your specific interest, regardless of your background – if you're in finance, marketing, or PR, a writer, an event planner, teacher, police officer, athlete, etc. We need your help. Email us at president@nycc.org

ENJOY YOUR APRIL!

Skiers and snowboarders live by the credo "No friends on a powder day." (See urbandictionary.com's great definition of "[powder day](#)".). In a comforting break from that credo, cyclists don't "drop" friends on group rides. But, whatever your fancy, have lightly turned thoughts of fun and get outside. Spring is here!

NYCC 2009 Financial Report

by **Beth Bryson**, NYCC Treasurer

As legislated by NYCC's by-laws, Beth has submitted for member review the Club's 2009 Financial Report.

NYCC ended 2009 with bank balances of \$45,026 versus \$32,914 at the end of 2008. In addition to these balances, the Club held balances for the Stan Oldak Youth Program of \$5,833 and \$4,617 for 2009 and 2008, respectively.

The increase in cash balances reflects higher membership revenues, flat general expenses, and lower subsidy costs for Club weekends. The membership revenue increase was largely due to earlier than normal membership registration as members sought to take advantage of the lower membership price offered until December 31, 2009. In addition, subsidy costs for Club weekends declined due to higher than expected attendance at West Pointin 2009.

Working capital remains adequate to provide advance funding for Club weekends and events, and to absorb projected increases in certain expenses (webhosting, in particular).

Pushing the Greenway North

by **Aja Hazelhoff**, Bicycle Advocate, Transit Alternatives



If you ride a bike in New York City, then you've seen the change Transportation Alternatives is bringing to our streets. Since 1973, T.A. has been fighting to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile, and to advocate for better bicycling, walking and public transit. We have lobbied successfully to increase the number of car-free hours in Central and ProspectPark, won bicycle access to all of the East River Bridges, and pushed the DOT to install more than 200 miles of bike lanes in key corridors throughout the city.

No bike path in the nation carries more riders or gives us more pride than the Hudson River Greenway on Manhattan's West Side. For those who use the greenway as a starting point for rides that cross over the Hudson into New Jersey, there is now a new path that safely connects cyclists from the George Washington Bridge to River Road, a critical improvement resulting from years of T.A. advocacy.

In 2010, T.A. is continuing its push to make the touring corridor stretching from Manhattan to Nyack via Route 9W safer for the thousands of cyclists that frequent it. We will be making a concerted effort to win improvements on the GWB, River Road, and 9W, as well as working to improve the relationship between cyclists and both motorists and local law enforcement. Cyclists who use this route will be integral in generating momentum for this campaign, and T.A. will be reaching out to cyclists to gather petition signatures and administer surveys to identify the sections most desperately in need of improvement.

Look out for us in the coming months – we will be working hard to

make GWB-9W a safe cycling corridor in 2010!

Check out updates on our website: <http://www.transalt.org/>

Legislative Action Work for BTCNJ

By Ted Semegran, Legislative Action Officer, Bicycle Touring Club of North New Jersey



Derek Chu, NYCC President, asked me to write a few short notes re some of the legislative action work I have been doing since 2001 for our bike club – the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey (BTCNJ.com)

I am sure our cyclists and those of the New York Cycling Club have crossed paths many times. As an example, we see your members crossing the George Washington Bridge (GWB) en mass on weekends while some of our members take rides into Manhattan as well as other boroughs. This allows us to extend our already excellent geographical cycling horizons with trips to the Rockaways, Coney Island, Arthur Avenue – Little Italy in the Bronx, City Island and even Floyd Bennet Field.

However, as you already know, New Jersey's riding is excellent, including the hills in High Point, the beaches from Sandy Hook and further south, along the Delaware and West to farm country. We have significant variety – just look at our rides on our website BTCNJ.com.

However, Derek asked me to specifically talk about our legislative work, some of our accomplishments and some of our future projects. BTCNJ has about 1,100 individual members (and including family memberships, as much as 1,400+ cyclists). The club has been in existence for nearly 40 years.

Our legislative action work includes projects mainly in Bergen and Hudson County as well as the GWB, though it sometimes extends to other areas such as the potential new Tappan Zee Bridge and the need for a bike/ped path on the proposed bridge.

The most recent successful projects, which some of you may have encountered, is the ½-mile path from the GWB to the Palisades Park going South on River Road. That project was initially proposed by a New Jersey rep of Transportation Alternatives and me. It took us from late 2001 to early 2009 to get it completed. The path cost over \$1 million and was mainly paid for by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Palisades Park and Fort Lee. Another GWB project was getting a website to tell cyclists when/if the South path was open (or if there was a need to switch to the 139 steps on the North path). We now have an alert system. Since we have reasonably good relations with the Port Authority, we are trying to improve safety on the GWB. For example, we are trying to get the Port Authority to make the stairs on the North path safer (*i.e.*, a safety coating). We have asked NYCC to please document any accidents, etc., to help support our case. Any other things you might like? Please tell us!

A cycling-related project we are currently working on is

improvements to River Road from Fort Lee down to Weehawken (bike shoulders, paths, Sharrows). I made a presentation to Hudson County Freeholders in late 2005 and recently in December 2009. In the last session, the Freeholders seemed very interested in improving the road for cyclists. Possibly in two years or so, you may see bike shoulders and Sharrows in the road. Now, I am working on getting Bergen County to do the same in the narrow roads of Edgewater and Fort Lee. Unlike New York City projects, one has to go to County persons, local towns, etc. It's a never-ending series of meetings unlike the seemingly more joint effort in New York City.

Lastly, I wanted to follow up on a suggestion I made to Derek re safety on 9W, the road most of you take when you go to Piermont/Nyack.

I hope you can help New Jersey cyclists.

Whenever we are trying to get any cycling safety work done in our area, politicians and ordinary citizens always say "cyclists take up the road and ride in bunches, etc." I know all of us are guilty at times but if we want to have better cycling conditions, we need to do something sooner about that!

I am asking New York Cycling Club cyclists to:

Please ride single file on 9W and Piermont Rd, and wherever you ride in New Jersey.

Please tell non-club riders the same.

Not only will this improve our visibility to New Jersey politicians and citizens, it will allow us to get further needed work done such as cycling paths/trails/Sharrows. Note that we are trying to introduce Sharrows in most northern New Jersey towns (you have them throughout New York City) to make motorists aware they need to "share the road." Sharrows were just approved in the MUTCD manual so we are working vigorously to get them introduced. The more cyclists obey the rules of the road, the better chance we have of getting improved roads for cyclists.

Note also, that local towns may soon enforce ticketing of cyclists who do not ride single file (similar to that enforcement in Piermont and Nyack). Hopefully we won't need such enforcement.

"How the Sidewalk/Path from the GW Bridge to 'River Road' was Conceived"

– excerpt from Dec. 2007, *MasterLink*, the monthly publication of BTCNJ

By Ted Semegran, Legislative Action Director – Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey



Cyclists on newly built path to Palisades Park from Fort Lee Historic Park

Steep section of newly built path to Palisades Park from Fort Lee Historic Park

The New Jersey pedestrian/bicycle entrance to the George Washington Bridge (GWB) is the location of one of the busiest bicycle intersections in New Jersey. And, as noted by Fred Kaimann (formerly the New Jersey rep of Transportation Alternatives), it is also one of New Jersey's most dangerous locations as a narrow, twisting stretch of road that climbs the Palisades from the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP) to just south of the GWB. Culminating in the Main Street/Hudson Terrace area of Fort Lee, NJ, it is a route that thousands of cyclists use daily and each weekend to travel between the GWB's pedestrian/bicycle pathway, Route 9W, the PIP and the Hudson River Greenway.

The importance of this area for bicycle commuters and recreational riders is that it is the cyclist's only (non-ferry) Hudson River crossing for 35 miles. A relatively inexpensive and attractive solution to reduce hazards in this problem area was proposed by Transportation Alternatives, a New York-based advocacy group. They proposed a ¾-mile multiuse path to allow safe passage for cyclists and pedestrians along this busy roadway. T.A. suggested that the connector be located on the east side of Hudson Terrace and Main Street, between the GWB and the entrance to the Palisades Interstate Park. The land on that route was owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (sidewalk) and the PIP Commission.

Fred and I began speaking with the major "players" in the region in 2001. This included talks with the Port Authority, Palisades Interstate Park, officials in Fort Lee, the Bergen County Freeholders, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), as well as many New Jersey Senators and Congressmen.

Our first step was obtaining letters of support from all of the above. Talks then turned to financing needed for the project and eventually to necessary approvals to build the "new" pedestrian/bicycle path, somewhat modeled after the Hudson River Greenway path (though obviously much shorter). The cost of this path was estimated to be in the \$500,000 to \$2 million range.

Numerous questions had to be answered: Who would fund it? The Palisades Interstate Park Commission? The State of New Jersey? Fort Lee? The Port Authority? Some combination of the above? When and how might it be built?

This was the scope of the project from late 2002 through 2006. No one organization was willing to fund the building of the path by itself. On the other hand, all thought it a good idea. A critical issue revolved around NJDOT's and Fort Lee's plans to widen Hudson Terrace from the Fort Lee Historical Park down to the PIP entrance and further down to Edgewater. Some of the land needed for the road-widening project was owned by the PIP.

The time frame for the road project had always been "over the next few years." However, with PIP desiring the pedestrian/bicycle path be built to access the park, they agreed to give up some of the "scrub" land on the western side of the park, especially if the construction of the pedestrian/bicycle path could be completed simultaneously with the road-widening project.

In 2004, Fred and I learned that PIP had some reserve funds originally designated to be used for building a trail in the Alpine area of their park. They subsequently pleasantly surprised us by saying

they would use these funds for the path construction. The result of all of this work was to be a regulation-wide pedestrian/bicycle path from the sidewalk just south of the GWB (South Path) down to the Park alongside Hudson Terrace. The construction began in September 2007.

[*Masterlink* Editor's note: The sidewalk was completed in late 2008/early 2009]

NYCC OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR A PUBLIC SCHOOL YOUTH CYCLING PROGRAM

Now that, thanks to NYCC, you are a skilled cyclist, are you interested in sharing those great skills with someone half your size, one-quarter of your age, and who's willing to absorb your cycling knowledge like a sponge?

The Columbia Secondary School (CSS), a selective public school serving a diverse, talented and academically motivated group of kids from northern Manhattan needs volunteers to help run its Safe Cycling course, which runs for 8 weeks (16 session), from September to May. You will be helping groups of 24 students – ages 11-14 and who range in riding ability – learn basic bike handling, safe hand signaling, rules of the road and skills for safe riding in vehicular traffic.



Typically, the CSS Cycling Program operates on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30pm - 4:00pm. The school has a large paved yard for instructing beginners and is also located close to three parks: Morningside, Riverside and Central Park.

In order to operate the Cycling Program properly, CSS's meager public school budget forces the program to rely on the kindness and generosity of volunteers. If you have the time, help CSS students discover the joy of cycling!

Please contact Andrew Stillman, CSS's Assistant Principal (email: andrewstillman@columbiasecondary.org), if you are able to join the school's rides. The Columbia Secondary School and the children would

welcome your assistance even if you could participate only on a temporary or occasional basis.

To learn more about CCS's Cycling Program, [click here](#).

To learn more about ColumbiaSecondary School, [click here](#).

NYCC MEMBER IN FOCUS

B-SIG QUALIFICATION RIDE - ONE MEMBER'S STORY

By Eunice Martínez, NYCC Content Editor

Last year, I completed the C-SIG (Group 1) on a heavy-as-lead hybrid. A true novice cyclist, I wore thick sweatpants and sweatshirts with cotton t-shirts – a look I can only describe as Pillsbury Doughgirl-ish. I had no idea what toe cages nor clipless pedals were, no less what they were for. So you get the picture – I knew *nothing* about cycling. By the time I finished the C-SIG, Susan, Dottie and my other ride leaders had imparted so much cycling information and taught me so many skills that I began to look and ride like a real cyclist. Gone was the sweat-absorbing apparel, traded in for sleek, moisture-wicking fabrics. Oh, I also discovered the existence and purpose of a chamois in riding shorts and booty butta (thank you Dottie)! And as a reward to myself for completing the C-SIG, I plunked down the cold cash for a Specialized Dolce road bike! By the fall, I had adopted clipless pedals. Susan and Dottie did a great job in fashioning me in their own image! But it was Jennell who slipped the B-SIG bug in my bonnet!

"Come on, Eunice, we can do it! We can do the B-SIG!" she exhorted again and again. I began to believe her. We both went into high gear (pun intended) with our workouts at the gym. Jennell, always a few steps ahead of me, was already running for 45 minutes on the treadmill when I was heaving and puffing at 15. We registered early for the B-SIG and my master plan was to be all worked-out and physically primed the day of the qualification ride. Aaahh, the best laid plans...

I caught a serious cold a full week before the B-SIG qualification ride that laid me out that whole week. No gym, no indoor trainer, no nuthin'. Just dragging myself home from work each day and throwing myself into bed after consuming heavy doses of NyQuil. The night before the ride, Jacques, my adopted cycling guru, calls to mentally prep me, pretty much how a boxer's trainer bombards him/her with tips on how to best an opponent just before stepping into the ring. Mentally ready, I just pray that the flesh won't be weak!

Saturday morning. Time to qualify. Feeling better but not 100%. Jennell calls me at 6:30a.m., far too perky for my taste, she asks, "You ready?" I answer just as cheerily, "You know it!" despite my struggle to breathe. We agree to meet at the Boathouse.

9:30am and Jennell and I start on our four laps. As we pull out onto the loop, she wishes me luck and my right calf muscle cramps up. What?! Already?! Nah, I am not going out like that! Didn't even go through four wheel revolutions and I have to pull over to nurse a cramped muscle?! I keep pedaling telling myself that the bulging knot in my calf will work itself out.

For all of lap one, I am two bike-lengths behind Jennell. There are

big differences between her ride and my ride. Hers: maintaining even cadence, no visible sweat anywhere, attacking the hills with steady power and no heaving for air. Mine: the *exact* opposite. How could my performance be so starkly different? Well, it probably had to do with my intense amount of nasal effluence that would not stop! It was seriously hampering my ability to draw full breaths but what was I to do with it all? At first, I tried to be dainty and use the terry-clothed thumb area of my gloves. Problem is that those are meant for mere swipes, not full-on deluges. They got so nasty I could not even look at them and was already thinking about how I had to disinfect not only my gloves but also my handlebars.

At the end of the first lap, Jennell sipped a bit of water. At a lap and a half, I totally lost sight of her and that is when I officially dubbed her, "Jennell the Gazelle"!

So the official B-SIG Riders' Guide (page 7) warns about not blowing "snot rockets unless you're last in line!" I was riding solo so all bets were off, and as distasteful as I found it, I succumbed to doing just that. Eeeewww!

With my nasal passages cleared and less than 45 minutes left to beat the under-two-hours mark, I started to really ride. As I pulled into the Boathouse at the end of my fourth lap, I was told that I had made it in average time. Actually, I had made it by a small miracle and I knew that I had the stuff that B-SIGgers are made of.

The next time I saw the Gazelle, she was on her second slice of pizza at the school where B-SIG orientation was to take place. I gave her back a congratulatory pat as I sat down next to her. Soon, when I am healthy again, I will keep up with and perhaps even pass her. See you in the B-SIG Jennell!!

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