

Bike Banter

Old Spokes - FLC Seniors Cycling Club Newsletter

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What to you want
to see more of here?

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How did the Netherlands become the #1 bicycling nation? (#4 in the series)

CYCLING DEVASTATION



Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, and forced its surrender within a week. The Netherlands had declared its neutrality as it had before the First World War. Still, Germany needed to protect the sea coast from enemy invasion and wanted a corridor to invade France. The Netherlands defense included two regiments of 5,600 cycling infantry, all to no avail against the German tanks and air force.

During the first few months of the ensuing occupation, life for cyclists continued as before. In Amsterdam, its 300,000 bicycles outnumbered motorized vehicles by ten times. Life for motorists, however, changed dramatically. The Nazis pillaged the Dutch gasoline reserves and rationed what little remained for public consumption. Dutch motorists switched to riding bicycles, causing bike sales to boom.

Soon, though, the free-spirited, unruly behavior of Amsterdam's cyclists in traffic began to aggravate the speeding motorized occupiers. The cyclists were used to owning the road: riding several abreast, not keeping to the right-hand side, signaling lackadaisically, disrespecting traffic lights. In contrast, the military, habituated to Hitler's 1934 traffic law, wanted to affirm the precedence of the motor vehicle.

The authorities introduced a plethora of draconian regulations to discipline cycling habits: cars with mounted loudspeakers to admonish wayward cyclists; blackout rules for night-time riding; cycling to the right as far as possible and with no more than two abreast; proper hand signaling; yielding to German vehicles; outlawing of bicycle taxis; no unattended bicycles; removal of tire valves; impounding of bicycles, fines, and even jail. Nothing worked except to irk citizens and the authorities.

The cut-off of rubber imports from the Dutch East Indies collapsed tire production. The authorities introduced a complicated system of rationing tires that took into account distances to workplaces and traffic stops. They encouraged walking.

The price of bicycles with proper tires surged, and as a result, thefts of bicycles, already a problem, increased. Anne Frank lost her bike to theft.

Worse came. In May 1942, the authorities compelled Jews to register their bikes, and later, make them available to workers who needed them. That was nothing compared to the order to report to work camps. Next, the Nazis suspected an imminent Allied invasion along the North Sea coast, so they requested 50,000 bicycles by quota from the country's cities. People rushed to the garages to remove their bikes, sometimes with the connivance of Dutch police. They disassembled them and hid the parts in attics, rooftops, and buried underground. The Resistance urged people to destroy their bikes rather than surrender them.



By 1943, opposition to the occupiers became rife in all forms, and cyclists did their part by disobeying traffic laws deliberately. The Resistance urged throwing tacks and broken glass onto the roadways to deter military traffic, but that ripped up bicycle tires. Cyclists nursed their tires as best they could, but when they failed, they fixed a second threadbare tire over the first, filled tires with rubber floor coverings or old linoleum, or lined their rims with wood, rope, strips from car tires, garden hoses, or even vacuum cleaner hose. They rode on metal rims carefully if they found nothing else, slipping and sliding on wet surfaces.



In late 1944, with Canadian liberation months away, Amsterdammers suffered a winter of starvation, the *Hongerwinter*. Food became scarce; the Nazis cut off the city's supplies of gas and electricity. The population ventured into the countryside, searching for food with personal possessions to trade, using their rusty bikes as conveyances.

After the war, it was common for Netherlanders to greet inquiring German tourists by asking them to "First, return my bike." In the 1974 FIFA World Cup, the

Netherlands, with its powerful brand of Total Football, was expected to beat the German side in the final. Instead, they lost 2-1. During the game, the Netherlands' fans chanted, "First, return my bike." In 1988, the Dutch side defeated Germany, the host country, in the UEFA Euro semi-final. The fans, this time, chanted, "Grandma, we've found your bike."



Next: *Verdomme!* Someone pinched my bike.

Sources: In the City of Bikes by Peter Jordan and other sources.

Editor: We invite your critique, comment, or question about this article or any other in this series. We may publish it with your permission.

Peter Bradbury

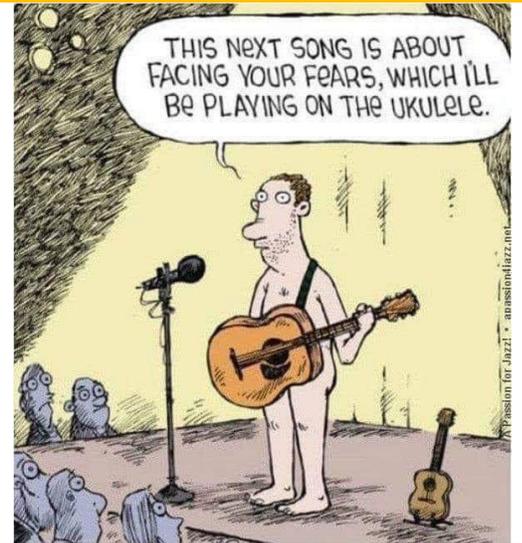
OK E-Bikers...!

How is the advent of e-bikes impacting Old Spokes Cycling Club? If you are riding an analogue or regular bike, how does the increasing presence of e-bikes in our rides effect you?

Or does it?

We received no email about his topic – so we guess everyone is quite satisfied with the inclusion of e-bike riders following our E-bike Guidelines on rides!

Well done all!



Cycling-Related Classified Ads Section

After a request from an Old Spokes Cycling Club member, we decided to offer this opportunity for Club members. You can place an advertisement of your cycling-related item, including a description and photo of your item, your asking price, and your contact information for interested buyers.

NOTE: The Old Spokes Cycling Club assumes no responsibility for this process, similar to listings available in newspapers' Classified Ads.



6061 giant Rincon Aluxx

26 inch wheel - 21 speed red

Asking \$200

Phone 587-228-2886



CCM bike rack for 1 or 2 bikes

Fits 1 1/4 or 2 inch hitch

Folds compactly while cycling and for storage

Asking \$100.

Phone 403-608-4580



The Power of Tea

Tea is, indeed, a powerful ancient superfood. Tea is affordable, easy to prepare, and can be made daily with a minimal investment. Experts at Harvard School of Public Health recommend at least 3 CUPS A DAY!

Research suggests that drinking at least three cups of either black or green tea per day reduced the risk of stroke and other health concerns.

And for those concerned about caffeine, you can get decaffeinated green, black tea and a host of different delicious blends.

Create a space in your day for a cup of tea. You can find an assortment of organic teas at your local grocery or health food store that will keep you healthy and happy.

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/other-healthy-beverage-options/>

**Husband and I
went grocery
shopping with
masks, got home,
took off masks,
brought home
wrong husband!
Stay alert people!**



*Drinking a daily cup of tea
Will surely starve the medicine seller.
- Chinese Proverb*

The Perfect Tea For Any Mood

NEED SLEEP



ANXIOUS



UNEASY



POSITIVITY



NEED ENERGY



UNCOMFORTABLE



ANGRY



STRESSED



DEPRESSED



TIRED



UpcomingHealth.com

Hello

Do you know that a simple "hello"
Can be a sweet one?

The word HELLO means:

H = how are you?

E = everything all right?

L = like to hear from you

L = love to see you soon!

O = Obviously I miss you...

So, Hello!

Reflections

If the mountain seems too big today,
Then climb a hill instead.
If the morning brings you sadness,
It's okay to stay in bed.
If the day ahead weighs heavy
And your plans feel like a curse,
There's no shame in re-arranging,
Don't make yourself feel worse.
If a shower stings like needles
And a bath feels like you'll drown,
If you haven't washed your hair for days,
Don't throw away your crown!
A day is not a lifetime,
A rest is not defeat.
Don't think of it as failure,
Just a quiet, kind retreat.
It's okay to take a moment
From an anxious, fractured mind.
The world will not stop turning
While you get realigned.
The mountain will still be there
When you want to try again,
So climb it in your own time
...and love yourself 'til then.



Ireland and Peg's Cottage

Old Spokes - FLC Seniors Cycling Club
Promotes health and fitness for cyclists 55+

www.flcseniors.ca/activities/cycling

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