

# Bike Banter

Old Spokes - FLC Seniors Cycling Club Newsletter

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Got something funny?  
Encouraging? Interesting?  
Send to the editorial team at:  
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## HOW DID THE NETHERLANDS BECOME THE #1 BICYCLING NATION?

It all started with the advent of the “safety bike” in the 1890s, with its low mount, diamond frame, two wheels of equal size, and, most importantly, pneumatic tires. However, the Netherlands was slow to begin: locally manufactured bikes were expensive; Germany, Great Britain, and France, among European nations, were more innovative; America mass-produced and exported competing good quality bikes at low cost.

Initially, cycling was recreation and sport for the affluent. It was not transportation for the masses, as in later years. The cobbled streets of Netherlands cities detracted from the enjoyment of riding. The notable exception was Vondelpark in central Amsterdam, where the town built compact, promenade pathways which hordes of recreational cyclists frequented.

People were unaccustomed to riding bicycles when young, as now, so many attended elaborate riding schools to learn how. Typical instruction started on a stationary bike, moved onto a harness hung from above, and finished with etiquette involving men tipping their hats while riding with one hand, and women riding in a ladylike manner.



In 1897, 16-year-old Queen Wilhemina, reigning under a regency, purchased a bicycle. Her mother, Emma, the regent, forbade her daughter riding it. Wilhemina appealed to the Council of State, but it ruled against her because riding a bicycle was deemed unbecoming of a monarch ruling over an empire with 50 million subjects (90% of whom lived in the Dutch East Indies). As a consolation, Emma presented Wilhemina with a gift of a buggy drawn by four Shetland ponies. The strong-willed Wilhemina obeyed but, upon emancipating at the age of 18, started riding her bike, thereby enhancing her popularity and that of cycling. Wilhemina went on to reign for 58 years, more than any other monarch until then, and became the first female billionaire in dollars.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the Netherlands intensified the use of bicycles, in contrast to the United States, where the automobile quashed the country's golden era of cycling. Amsterdam's streets became congested with the mix of slow-moving carts, newly introduced cars, many unruly pedestrians and cyclists, and the recently created tram system. In 1906, the city mayor prohibited bike riding and car driving on certain streets, but protests overturned the ban. He introduced traffic cops to sort the mess, amusing bystanders, still with little success.



During those first two decades, the bicycle as a mode of everyday transport remained mostly unaffordable. But at the end of the First World War, in which the Netherlands remained neutral, Germany suffered hyperinflation. Excellent German bikes became cheap to import, an activity conducted through warehouses in converted peoples' homes on the border. The price of a new bicycle dropped from 129 guilders in 1919 to 61 guilders in 1925. That produced a flood of bikes and inaugurated the Netherlands' golden age of cycling.

As the price of bicycle transportation dropped, people in Amsterdam switched from riding trams to riding bicycles, which led to the disappearance of some tram lines.

Bike riding in Amsterdam in the 1930s increased dramatically for the city was well suited to two-wheel travel. Built atop flat wetlands with no hindering inclines aside from those on canal bridges, it was compact, easily accessible with a trek by bike. Competing automobile traffic was made difficult by the narrow streets, countless intersecting canals, and lack of space for parking. The relatively mild climate accommodated cycling, but in inclement weather, a cyclist could spring for a tram ride.

The typical Dutch design of most bicycles in use was conducive to lots of riding. A rider could sit upright on a bike comfortably, relieving any strain on the back, shoulders, and arms; the seat was broad and well-cushioned; the bike was sturdy enough to bear racks in the front and the back to carry passengers or goods; the handlebar was raised and curved inwards within reach of the hands. A rider could steer the bike with one hand and carry something in the other or hold hands with a beau. The Dutch bike was not designed for speed but for getting to a destination reliably. It was unpretentious, likely colored black. People could jump on their bike without changing clothes: they could commute in their work clothes or attend a party in their finery. The bicycle was appropriate for diverse uses and affordable to all classes, which accounted for its widespread adoption.



Next: In the meantime, what was happening in the U.S.?

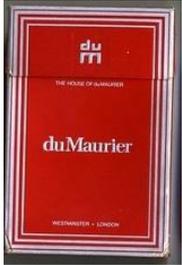
Sources: In the City of Bikes by Pete Jordan, and others.

Note: Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, an Argentine by birth, attended Northlands School in Buenos Aires, the same as Anne, my wife.

Peter Bradbury

## Father's Day in the 60's

*You might have bought Dad a pipe and some tobacco for Father's Day, thinking that he might enjoy the change from cigarettes.*

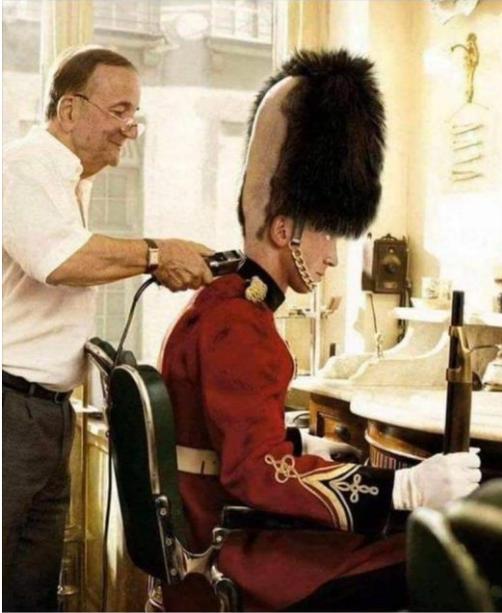


*Who remembers Robert Goulet singing those 'Smoke Du Maurier' commercials?*



*And how about the 'Marlboro Man'?*

## Who knew?



## The art of conversation

"The art of conversation consists as much in listening politely as in talking agreeably; therefore never interrupt anyone who may be speaking to you, and at the same time do not let your eyes wander to other objects, but keep them on the speaker."

- Manners of Modern Society  
by Eliza Cheadle, 1875

These "Golden Oldies" instructions from vintage etiquette manuals still ring true – because courtesy never goes out of style.



## Quiz - What's your score?

*There are only nine questions.*

*This is a quiz for people who know everything! I found out in a hurry that I didn't. These are not trick questions. They are straight questions with straight answers...*

- 1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.*
- 2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?*
- 3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?*
- 4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?*
- 5. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?*
- 6. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters 'dw' and they are all common words. Name two of them.*
- 7. There are 14 punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name at least half of them?*
- 8. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.*

## Reflections

### Time.

Time to do the things we've been wanting to do  
but said we didn't have the time.

Time to spend time with family.

Time to spend time alone.

Time to work on that project.

Time to read that book.

Time to clean.

Time to decorate.

Time to write.

Time to create.

Time to take a walk in nature.

Time to learn that new language.

Time to learn that new instrument.

Time to learn.

We are getting what we've been asking for:  
Time.

Time to make that phone call.

Time to forgive.

Time to get to know someone.

Time to grow.

Time to get to know you.

Time to dream.

Time to play.

Time to grieve.

Time to breathe.

Time to Be.

WE ARE BEING GIVEN TIME.  
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?

Carolyn J Phinney  
Powerful You

## A Clever Orator

As your life has changed due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and you consider the many options available to invest your time and talents, I am reminded of a quote I heard:

*Are you looking for something  
To get your giddy-up going  
And your  
Flag up the pole?*

- Brian Ward  
700 Club Canada



*Giddyup*

9. Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter 'S.'

Answers to Quiz:

1. Boxing.

2. Niagara Falls ... The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.

3. Asparagus and rhubarb.

4. Strawberry.

5. It grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.

6. Dwarf, dwell and dwindle...

7. Period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation mark, brackets, parenthesis, braces, and ellipses.

8. Lettuce.

9. Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts.



## Questions about E-Bikes

### 1. Which electric bikes are legal on City pathways?

For those considering the purchase and/or use of an e-bike, the Old Spokes Cycling Club website has some information to review. For example, see a new #3 item under this heading:

### STEPS TO SIGN UP FOR AN OLD SPOKES CYCLING CLUB RIDE:

**3. NEW If you ride an e-bike**, review [Electric Bikes on Pathways](#) regulations from the City of Calgary. The same rules apply to Alberta Parks pathways like in Fish Creek Park.

It is important to be clear on the e-bike cycling rules in both the City and the Province. Non-pedaled or throttle bikes are not allowed on Pathways because they operate more like a motorcycle. However, many e-bikes have both power assist and a throttle. On pathways, use only power assist so you are pedaling and getting a power boost when you need it.

Also on our website is this new feature:

**NEW All members who ride e-bikes abide by:** [Group Riding Guidelines for E-Bike Riders](#)

### 2. What is the difference between pedal-assist and electric bikes?

Here is information from <https://www.electropedal.com/blogs/blog/71989187-knowing-the-difference-pedal-assist-vs-throttle-control>

So you're in the market to buy an electric bike and want to know the different propulsion mechanisms used to assist riders in powering their bikes? Look no further. Here is a simple outline of the main types of electric bikes you will come across on your shopping journey.

#### Throttle control:

Throttle control is most similar to a motorcycle. When you engage the throttle, power is sent to the wheels to propel you forward. There are many different types of throttles that are used on electric bikes. There are classic grip twisting throttles (like a motorcycle), thumb throttles, and push button throttles. The rider can metaphorically "turn up the power". While using these controls, the rider is still able to pedal the bicycle to create additional momentum.

#### Pedal Assist:

Commonly referred to as Pedelec, pedal assist bikes provide power to the rider only when he or she is pedaling. Riding an electric bike equipped with a pedal assist motor is often said to feel more natural. You can only gain extra power when you are pedaling, and the bike has no on demand power, like that of throttle control bikes. There are two main types of these bikes, torque sensor pedal assist, and cadence sensor pedal assist.

-Torque sensor is when the bike intuitively tells how hard you are pedaling and increases or decreases power output based on that reading. This type of electric bike is the most expensive and gives the rider the most intuitive and natural feel.

-Cadence sensor is a more fixed rate of power output. You simply pick your level of assistance and you will have that extra power no matter how light or hard you are pedaling.

**Finally**, there are electric bikes which combine both throttle control and pedal assist. Some bikes allow riders to use both simultaneously, while other bikes only allow you to use one at a time. There are a plethora of different electric bikes on the market and you are guaranteed to find one to match your specific riding needs.

### **Suggestions to consider:**

Regarding what type of bike to buy, your best option is to look at e-bikes other Club members are riding and ask questions about the features and what they like best. Bike shops offer many different brands and prices with varying levels of comfort depending on your body.

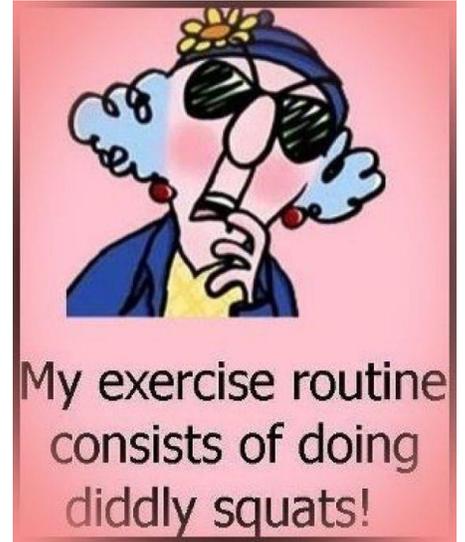
After researching e-bikes for quite some time, my priorities included weight (to be able to easily lift it, with battery removed, onto a bike rack –depending on your bike rack’s weight capacity), also location of the battery to provide the best centre of gravity. Battery life is important (how many km you can ride before needing to recharge) and amenities like fenders, a back-wheel rack, front light, horn etc. In addition, you can consider whether also having a throttle is important to you (non-pedaling power boost to use when starting up at traffic lights, and up steep hills when you don’t have much momentum.)

Some Club members have had a conversion kit installed on their bike, thereby making it an e-bike. Again, seek those persons out and chat about the results.

Anticipate an adjustment period to get used to an e-bike. Since the weight is different (it is heavier than a regular bike), you may need to use the lower power levels more often than you may think to maintain the same momentum as your regular bike. However, it is easy to turn power off and on.

You may want to request some coaching tips from more seasoned e-bike riders.

Pam Lester



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

***[www.flcseniors.ca/activities/cycling](http://www.flcseniors.ca/activities/cycling)***

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