

CARBUSTERS

MAGAZINE #30

Carfree
and Jetfree
Travel

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BIKE TOUR • TRAIN DIARY • WALKERS WELCOME



Escape

From High-impact Travel

We've got a dilemma here: *Carbusters* is an international magazine serving a cosmopolitan audience. You the reader are well-read, concerned, and probably a global citizen. You've traveled. You've experienced other cultures with curiosity and an open mind. You've served as an ambassador of noble ideas.

You are a traveler; those other schmucks are tourists.

You and I know the difference.

But guess what, all that travel has its costs. How do we reconcile our higher ideals with the reality that one airline trip equals a year of driving? It's a tough question and one which we address in this issue.

Are there ways to mitigate our impacts? Repentant travel writer Charles Montgomery tries to find a way out of his guilt by asking, "Do carbon offsets work?"

(Probably not. There is no "undo" button when it comes to climate change.)

Our centerfold world map is intended to help you find interesting carfree destinations *near* you. Please don't fly there for just a weekend peek.

Beyond looking at destinations, we present soft-travel models ripe for duplication right where you are:

- In England, Hedben Bridge is selling itself as a carfree destination with its pilot Walkers Welcome certification, designed for export elsewhere.
- In the Czech Republic, Cyclists Welcome adapts and expands on similar programmes in Europe aimed at encouraging bicycle tourism.
- World Carfree Network member ISO brings ecotourism to Poland.
- Cycling maestro Dan Mourek surveys automated bike rental systems aimed at helping both locals and tourists get around various European capitals.
- Ecotopia Biketour underscores the point that how we get there is as important as where we're going.

Tourism is not big business — it's the biggest business. More money, time and equipment are involved with tourism than any other human enterprise. In 2004, there were 763 million tourist visits, accounting for 12% of global economic activity. One in eight humans went somewhere far, far away that year looking for fun, knowledge, escape from the ordinary. A lot of time, wealth, and effort went into those trips. But one has to wonder if maybe there is another way. A slower pace.

In his essay *On Walking*, Henry Thoreau reveals the origins of the word saunter. It derives from the French *Saint Terre* — Holy Land — and refers to people who idled about and begged alms under the pretense of being pilgrims walking their way towards spiritual enlightenment — *Saint Terrers*. Must one go far and fast to find the promised land? It seems more likely to be found close at hand when one slows down. To saunter is to see and be.

In these pages we celebrate the slower modes, the pointless travel — as opposed to point-to-point — where the journey is the reward.

"Wherever you go, there you are."

Many vacations replace one schedule with another. The work routine is replaced by the travel routine: itineraries, reservations, rentals. Whether it's work or recreation, people play by the rules imposed by clocks and calendars. Truly radical travel is that which takes one out of time. The way to do that is by slowing down.

Travel is an equation with three variables: distance, rate, time.

How we apportion those factors is up to us.

There was a time when the brave thing was to choose to travel, to set forth, venture out, explore.

Now the bravest thing might be staying put. The choice is yours.

Carbusters

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www.worldcarfree.net

notable quotables

"There is an urgency that wasn't there before. The science is there, the economics is there and the politics is there ...If they don't take this opportunity then we really should start to think about the future of life on earth."

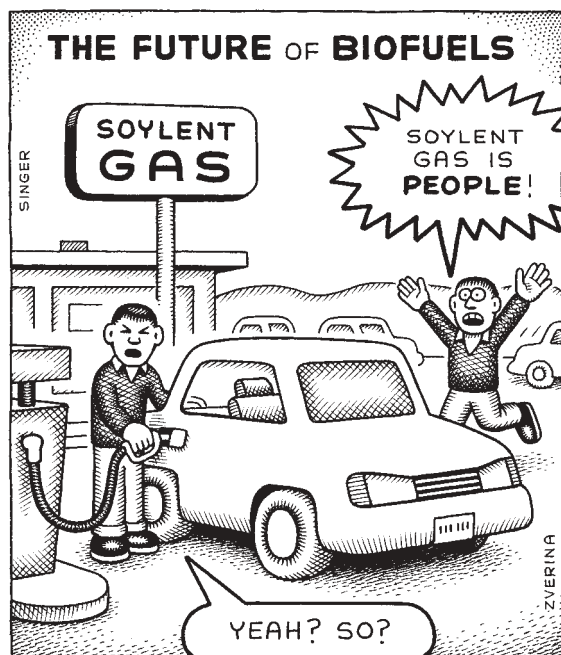
- Tony Juniper, Director of Friends of the Earth <www.foe.co.uk>, commenting on the coming April EU/US energy summit. His comments coincided with the "Doomsday Clock" being moved ahead two minutes to five minutes until midnight to acknowledge the threat global warming poses to civilisation.

"ExxonMobil has manufactured uncertainty about the human causes of global warming just as tobacco companies denied their product caused lung cancer. A modest but effective investment has allowed the oil giant to fuel doubt about global warming to delay government action just as Big Tobacco did for over 40 years."

- Alden Meyer, Director of Strategy & Policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists <www.ucsusa.org> which issued a report in February detailing how the world's largest oil company has donated US\$16 million since 1998 to 43 ideological groups working to discredit the science of human-induced climate change.

NO EXIT

© Andy Singer



"[T]he emerging competition between cars and people for grain will likely drive world grain prices to levels never seen before. ...This unprecedented diversion of the world's leading grain crop to the production of fuel will affect food prices everywhere. As the world corn price rises, so too do those of wheat and rice.... Both corn and wheat futures were already trading at 10-year highs in late 2006."

- Lester Brown, Earth Policy Institute

<www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2007/Update63.htm>

"Expand your view beyond the question of how we will run all the cars by means other than gasoline. This obsession with keeping the cars running at all costs could really prove fatal. It is especially unhelpful that so many self-proclaimed "greens" and political "progressives" are hung up on this monomaniacal theme. Get this: cars are not part of the solution (whether they run on fossil fuels, vodka, used [vegetable] oil, or cow shit). They are at the heart of the problem. And trying to salvage the entire Happy Motoring system by shifting it from gasoline to other fuels will only make things much worse. The bottom line of this is: start thinking beyond the car. We have to make other arrangements for virtually all the common activities of daily life."

- James Kunstler, author of *The Long Emergency* and *The Geography of Nowhere*

<www.alternet.org/envirohealth/47705>

"What we gain by hybrid cars and ethanol buses, we more than lose because of sheer numbers of vehicles."

- Ronan Uhel, senior scientist, European Environment Agency <www.eea.europa.eu>

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Daniel Mourek is International Affairs Coordinator for the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation, where he works with the Central European and Eastern Greenways, European Greenway Association <www.visitgreenways.org> and European Cyclist Federation <www.ecf.com>.

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<www.andysinger.com>

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Spotlight on: Climate Change

<www.exxonsecrets.org>

See how ExxonMobil subverts climate science

<www.climatedenial.org>

Blog exploring psychology of climate change denial

<www.climateimc.org>

Read and be the media

<www.coinet.org.uk/climateradio>

Archived streaming radio programmes

<news.yahoo.com/fc/World/Climate_Change>

Online hub for worldwide climate change news

<www.myspace.com/carbusters>

Network with climate change groups

letters



A lot of people wrote asking what the trick was behind Steve Hanson's empty freeway photo on page 2 of Carbusters 29. Many guessed Photoshop. Another suggested a night filter when the road was empty. We wish we could say there was no trick, that that stretch of interstate was really that empty; but there was a trick. Sigh. Steve writes: "The secret is it's a time exposure! I use very slow film and leave the shutter open long enough to make the cars fade away."

Continuing Education

I enjoyed the review of Chris Balish's book, *How to Live Well Without Owning a Car* (Carbusters 29). I would like to politely disagree with Steve von Pohl's review in a minor way. The review stated, "If you're reading this magazine, then this book is not for you." If I read the book should I not read Carbusters? I read Carbusters not only to enjoy, but to hopefully learn more about the culture and science of cycling.

Nearly daily one hears from the non-cycling majority about how "difficult" it is to bike to work. Magazines like Carbusters and books like Mr. Balish's help further educate those of us already familiar with the carfree (or car-lite) message who wish to learn more. In a sense, it is continuing education. This education helps break the myths, stereotypes, hysteria, and marketing messages given to the public by corporations who want to keep the status quo, or by citizens who wish to hear only messages that reinforce their choice to drive a car.

It is very helpful to learn more so that when I speak before a community council, the Mayor, or non-cycling groups, I have an abundance of factual information to counter the mythical "common sense and knowledge" questions that the non-cycling public asks. I would say that Mr. Balish's book is complementary to the fine work published by Carbusters magazine.

Sincerely,
Louis Melini
Chair, Bicycle Advisory Committee
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
lou@cyclingatutah.com

Every Home Should Have One

The Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland, recently bought 25,000 copies of my book, *Cutting Your Car Use*. It will be given free to every household. Updated and revised in 2007 there are pages overprinted with local transport details. Though retailing at £3.95, there are bulk discounts down to 50p per copy (25,000 books cost £12,500).

Carbusters readers might ask their employers or town councils to place orders from Green Books <www.greenbooks.co.uk> or see <www.cuttingyourcaruse.co.uk>. There is a US version by Randall Ghent from New Society.

Anna Semlyen

Motor City Subversions

I thought I would send in a suggestion for some more family-oriented, pro-bike/pedestrian actions!

The town I'm from is a suburb of a suburb; you know how that urban sprawl goes. Not to mention it's outside of Detroit and the Daimler-Chrysler HQ is just down the street and we're surrounded by auto factories (which are all closing down and moving away). So the situation: relatively small, conservative township that's very loyal to the auto industry.

Actions:

1) At town fairs, tape off several parking spaces and reserve them for bicyclists. Tape off "prime" spaces that are nearest to the event so drivers are forced to walk a distance.

2) Offer discounts or free tickets to those who walk or bike to the community event. If there is a children's arts and crafts stand, offer "click clack" beads that attach to tire spokes or ribbons that attach to handle bars. The bike then becomes a way for children to express not only their commitment to the environment and keeping fit, but also as a form of self-expression and esteem. Make sure to advertise this before the event.

3) If there is a parade in town and your social club or group wants to take part, decorate your bikes or dress up and walk instead of riding in the bed of a truck or creating an auto-drawn float. Pass out gas-masks to standers-by who have to inhale the fumes of slowly-moving vehicles.

4) Hold a "classic bike cruise" that parallels classic car cruises or attend major classic car cruises, such as the Woodward Dream Cruise, and ride your bike in traffic to show how stress-free it is compared to trying to drive in streets choked with classic cars.

5) For parties create a car-shaped pinata and decorate the bat like a tree that's out for vengeance.

6) Many libraries have summer reading programmes. Request that books and stories with alternative transportation modes as central themes be included. Ask members of the programme to bike/walk to the library and have them write a story about what they did/what they passed on their trip to the library.

Ciao!

Joslyn Renee Johnson

Somewhere near Detroit, USA



Art meets engineering in Stockholm, Sweden's 100 tunnelbana metro stations.

"This year's Oscar presenters will receive a year of carbon neutral living courtesy of TerraPass, the leading carbon offset retailer."

- press release, Turk Entertainment Public Relations, February 26, 2007



CAR CULT REVIEW



photo: myearthdream.com

Honda's Earth Dream

"Dude, check out this one! It's all painted up like a space-eye view of the Earth. I heard Honda's going to race it in the Formula 1, in like 20 cities around the world, claiming they're all environmental and stuff. I mean, this is like one major road trip. We're talkin' Shanghai here. They call it 'myearthdream' — all in lowercase like all hip and cool or something. Pretty warped, huh?"

"And dude, this Earth graphic is made up of like 600,000 pixels. I mean like this would really crunch your hard drive. And each of these pixels has got someone's name written really small in it — I mean like really small. It's like some advanced Photoshop function or something."

"And these people with their names there, right, they've signed up with Honda to do something good for the planet, like recycle their paper, use low-energy light bulbs and ride their bike. Like people are really earnest and serious

about it. And some of these people even give Honda money for it; it's like a do-good charity or something. I mean, this is like 40,000 people around the world or something."

"So here they are all washing their laundry at low temperatures and shit, and being all conscientious taking the bus and shit, and then here you've got Honda riding around in this V8 dragster Earth car spewing out all this pollution. *Hello?!*"

"And check this out, here's their slogan, right: 'Small changes really can make a huge difference.' And then they say 'myearthdream is all about getting people to come together to make a difference' and 'we can do more than dream.'"

"Isn't that like way out there or what? I mean, isn't that just so cheesy? What are these people smoking, anyway? Like this dream they've got, maybe it's just like some wacked-out acid trip or something." - **RG**

Germany to Slow Down?

In early March, EU Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas dared go so far as to suggest that Germany should establish a speed limit on the autobahns as a climate-protection measure.

This has set off a huge controversy in Germany, the only country in Europe with no highway speed limit. Maximum speed limits on motorways in European countries tend to be in the range of 110-130 kmh, or 68-81 mph, which is already above the world average.

The *New York Times* spoke to Porsche 911 owner Marc Bongers, who says "speed is relative." He has topped 286 kmh (178 mph) on the autobahn, equivalent to the take-off speed of a Boeing 747 jet.

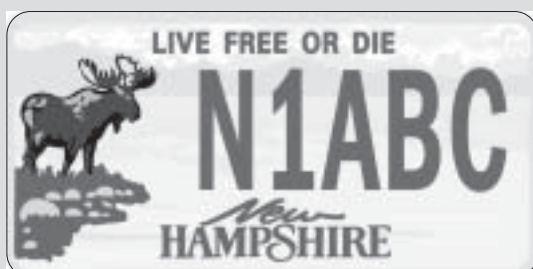
Another high-speed autobahn fan, Alois Ruf, told the press, "This is a dream we are selling to the world. It's a tradition I think we have to defend."

Not surprisingly, *Stars and Stripes*, the U.S. military publication, found that U.S. soldiers based in Germany were united against the speed limit proposal, and quoted one Staff Sgt. Marcus Berartez of Brownwood, Texas: "If you can afford to drive that fast, why not do it?"

American Public Media interviewed another citizen who is adamantly opposed. Angela Briggs, from Berlin, sees the proposal as "a joke" and feels that high-speed driving is her "birthright as a German citizen."

"Well, I think we have enough limits in Germany already, you know," she said. "And we need some small pieces where we can go a bit faster. But I think normally we have built up very fast cars, and you have to use them, you know?"

No, no one has suggested that the solution is to produce slower cars. That debate will be saved for the year 2030. - **RG**



The slogan on New Hampshire number plates reads "Live Free or Die."

They are manufactured by prisoners in the state penitentiary.

- Glen Logan, Hobart, Australia



photo: Bas Ruyters

Spotted in Tábor, Czech Republic: The latest handbag fashion for autophiliacs.

Cult Cars, from the Trabant to the Prius

The Trabant was the car that best captured the atmosphere of the Cold War era on the east side of the Berlin Wall. It was East Germany's "people's car," like the German Volkswagen or the Soviet Zaporozhets.

The Trabant is so polluting that it can't meet Germany's clean air standards, so they had to make a legal exemption to keep them on the road. None have been produced since 1991, but according to *Der Spiegel*, over 52,000 are still on the country's roads, out of three million produced.

When the first Trabant rolled off the assembly line, it was the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, November 7, 1957.

With all this symbolic meaning and the (not necessarily political) loyalty it inspires, the Trabant is what you'd call a cult car. With its 50th anniversary this year, you can be assured that thousands of fans will get their motors running hot in the celebrations.

According to Wikipedia, a cult car is an "automobile that has a strong fan following, as such having numerous owners clubs, or websites dedicated to it. Fans will usually go to otherwise unheard of lengths for their vehicles..."

A list of cult cars might include the BMW 2002, the Volkswagen Bus and Beetle, the Chevy Camaro and Corvette, the Citroën 2CV, the Honda Civic CRX, the Ford Mustang SVO, the Jaguar E-Type, the Lamborghini Countach, the 1961 Lincoln Continental, the Mazda Miata, the O.G. Mini, the Pontiac Thunderbird...

But now there's a new entrant on the scene, the Toyota Prius.

Even Hybridcars.com bluntly states: "The Prius inspires a cult-like devotion from its drivers." But there's something that makes Prius owners stand out from the rest of the auto aficionados.

"The distinctive look of the Prius sends a message, which can be interpreted any number of ways," states Hybridcars.com. "For some, it declares that we must take steps to reduce our voracious thirst for oil — with all its negative consequences in terms of the environment and geo-politics. For this camp, the Prius is like a middle-finger-on-wheels aimed at Hummers, Suburbans, Escalades, and the like. For others, the Prius's message is smug: 'Aren't I special? Don't I know better?'"

Backing up this point is a February 2 editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*, subtly titled "Confessions of a Prius Snob."

"Even as I signed the car loan papers, I denied the inevitable," writes Liane Bonin. "Just as I would never become exactly like my parents, I would never become a self-important jackass who believed getting 49 miles to the gallon would save the Arctic Circle." - **RG**

At right, the theme of hybrid owners' smugness enters the realm of poetry...

photo: terrorfreeoil.com



Feel-Good Pumping

"We've had people who have told us that they're driving 20 miles just to [come to] our gas station," says a proud Joe Kaufman, spokesperson for the Terror-Free Oil Initiative (TFO), which runs the above petrol station in Omaha, Nebraska, USA.

The plan is to get such stations set up and running all over the U.S.

The pilot station in Omaha has quickly become something of a tourist attraction, with people snapping photos and filling up their hearts and petrol tanks with patriotic fervor.

A sign next to the pump reads:



"Did you know that, when you purchase gasoline from most gas stations, you are helping to finance terrorism? That's right. Here at TFO,

we only use gasoline derived from companies that purchase their oil from non-Middle Eastern countries. Rest assured, when you buy TFO gas, you are assisting in the global war on terror."

Says Kaufman, champion of the run-on sentence: "We wanted to send a message to those gas companies that purchase their crude from the Middle East, that we know that when we pump our gasoline that we are sending our hard-earned dollars to a part of the world that wishes to destroy us, and we're sick and tired here in

America of financing our own demise."

Apparently the entire Middle East is out to get the well-meaning and defenseless superpower, which after all is just minding its own business and supporting liberty and justice for all. Not that the U.S. could possibly support or perpetrate terrorism itself, or encourage the anti-U.S. terrorism through its own policies. To even suggest such a thing these days could get you branded as...well, a terrorist. - **RG**

Hybrid Haiku

Without further delay, here are the six winners of our [Hybridcars.com's] first annual (and perhaps only) hybrid poetry contest:

Start up in silence
Pull away from the driveway
Hear leaves and twigs crunch
- Kim

Big cars go fast oops
They just ran out of gas oops
Hybrids just Go Go
- Pamela

Ten gallons of gas
will take me to Chicago
from New York City
- Butter

You, in the Hummer,
Driving like you own the road,
come back down to earth
- Kent

Ensnared in silence
I pause a moment, and breathe.
Traffic light turns green.
- Joan

Man with a Prius
Drives past many a gas station
And smiles to himself
- PB

Congrats to the winning poets, who prove that hybrid cars are poetry in motion.

- **Hybridcars.com**

UN Climate Change Report Urges Immediate Action

PARIS - On February 2, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report stating that global warming is "unequivocal," human activities are causing it, and the global temperature could rise by as much as six degrees by the end of the century.

Based on assessments of published research by hundreds of climate scientists, the report concludes that even if all emissions were stopped today, forces have been set in motion which will continue to make the planet a more dangerous place for decades to come. And if emissions are not radically curtailed, conditions will become much worse.

Increasing emissions of greenhouse gases are expected to further change the climate over the next 100 years. As a result, sea levels will rise by about half a metre, snow will disappear from all but the highest mountains, deserts will spread, oceans will become acidic, coral reefs will die, and deadly heatwaves will become more prevalent.

IPCC Chairman Rajendra Pachauri said, "I hope this report will shock people, governments, into taking more serious action, as you really can't get a more authentic and a more credible piece of scientific work."

- www.ipcc.org

Europe Weakens Key Climate Target for New Cars

BRUSSELS - The European Commission proposed to weaken an 11-year-old emissions target for new cars just days after the global scientific community warned policymakers to take serious and urgent action on climate change.

The Commission plans to introduce a legally binding target for average CO₂ emissions from new cars at 130 grammes per kilometer, 10 grammes more than the standing target of 120 g/km set in 1996. The impact of the weakened target will be 100 million tonnes of additional CO₂ emissions over the period 2012-2020, equivalent to twice the annual emissions of Sweden.

This backsliding accommodates car manufacturers who have failed to meet the decade-old

goal, which was voluntary. The new mandatory target will not be enforced until 2012, giving manufacturers four years to make their new cars about 20% less polluting than they are now.

Director of the European Federation for Transport and Environment, Jos Dings, said, "Not only is the car industry failing on its voluntary commitment to cut CO₂ emissions, the Commission now wants to reward this failure with a weaker fuel-efficiency target. It's a very disappointing response to calls last week by the IPCC for serious action on climate change."

Danish Minister for the Environment Connie Hedegaard attributed the decision to lobbying efforts by German car manufacturers: "It is not ambitious for the EU to set less restrictive goals than 120 g/km; it is just support for big German car producers."

The good news is the proposal does, for the first time, say that carmakers will now face binding legislation to improve fuel efficiency.

Said Dings, "Today's announcement finally recognises, ten years late, that regulation is needed on CO₂ emissions just as it is on safety and other forms of air pollution from cars."

- Transportenvironment.org

Higher Congestion Charges for Larger Cars

LONDON - Drivers in an affluent London suburb could be hit by residents' parking charges which penalise the most polluting cars such as 4x4s (SUVs).

Local council officials in Richmond, southwest London, say that they plan to give electric car owners free parking permits, while owners of vehicles with high carbon dioxide emissions could be charged three times the current annual price of £100 (EUR 149; US\$188).

Mayor Ken Livingstone has already tried to tackle traffic paralysis in the heart of the British capital with his £8 daily congestion charge, which expanded westwards in February.

Livingstone has also proposed charging owners of 4x4s — nicknamed "Chelsea tractors," as many are seen in that chic west London suburb — £25 a day for the congestion charge.

- Yahoo! News

Dublin Reclaims Its Streets

Transport officials in Dublin have drawn up proposals to eliminate cars from the heart of the capital. If approved by councillors, the city centre plan will mean the closure of College Green, West-Moreland Street and possibly O'Connell Street bridge to private motorists.

The plan has been drawn up by the Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) and Dublin City Council with the input of other agencies such as Dublin Bus and the Railway Procurement Agency.

Ciaran de Burca, a senior council official and project manager of the Quality Bus Network, said the plan could improve conditions for all city users. De Burca said: "Buses must be able to complete journeys faster than cars in order to make public transport more attractive to users."

Greenhouse gas emissions from private and commercial transport in Ireland have risen 140% since 1990, the largest increase in Europe.

- The Sunday Times, Febr. 4

Public Transport Starts to Benefit the Public

BEIJING - In recent years, Beijing's municipal government has added more financial input to the city's transport system and the amount has been raised from a couple of billion yuan every year to tens of billions of yuan a year (1 billion yuan = EUR 9.7 million or USD 13 million), with annual budget increases of 50% or more.

By issuing a new IC card, prices for most of the buses in Beijing are reduced to 40 cents and students taking buses will only pay 20 cents with the cards. In all, bus fares are being reduced to below one yuan, the *Shanghai Securities Journal* reported.

- Chinanews.cn

Italian Cities Ban Cars

Cars were banned in Rome, Milan and other Italian cities on Sunday, January 28, leaving residents to walk, ride bikes or use public transport.



The ban on cars and motor scooters, lasting most of the day, was put into place to lower pollution levels. There was no exemption for soccer fans going to stadiums, but public transport was increased.

Some people rode bikes or skated on what was a sunny day in both Rome and Milan. Other cities banning cars were Brescia, Como and Varese in the Lombardy region.

- Theage.com.au

Bad Air Days in Jakarta

The latest report to be released by the Jakarta Environmental Management Agency says that last year there were only 41 good air quality days.

According to the report, January was the cleanest month of the year, as roughly half of the good air days occurred during that month.

Home to about three million private cars and some four million motorcycles, Jakarta is regarded as one of the most polluted cities in Asia, if not the world.

- [The Jakarta Post](http://TheJakartaPost)

Air Pollution in Tehran Kills 3,600 People in One Month

Air pollution killed 3,600 people in just one month in the Iranian capital Tehran, an official said in January, describing the city's environmental situation as a "collective suicide."

"Pollution has directly or indirectly caused the deaths of 3,600 people in the month of Aban (October 23 to November 23)," said Mohammad Hadi Heydarzadeh, director of Tehran's clean air committee, quoted by *Kargozaran* newspaper.

He said that the deaths were caused by heart attacks brought on by the air pollution and that the smog was responsible for 80% of the fatal heart problems that month in Tehran, one of the world's most polluted cities.

Carbon monoxide from car exhaust is blamed for the majority of deaths by creating respiratory and cardiac problems in Tehran, which has 1.3 million aging cars with poor fuel efficiency, spewing lethal gases into citizens' lungs.

Half of Iran's six million cars fail to meet global standards and burn twice as much petrol as a European car. With pump prices merely at nine cents a liter (41 cents per gallon), streets are crammed with cars, with terrible traffic jams in rush hours.

A proposed 90% increase in gas prices is now making its way through the Iranian parliament.

- [Agence France-Presse](http://Agence-France-Presse)

São Paulo Buses Carry Record Numbers of Passengers

The fleet of 15,000 buses serving Brazil's largest city, São Paulo, transported 2.7 billion passengers last year, according to figures published by SPTrans, the city's public transport authority.

Added passenger capacity and integration with rail services were cited as reasons for the increase in ridership. Further enhancements are expected as 1 billion reais (US\$480mn) are being invested in 2006-2007 to increase the number of buses.

- Bnamericas.com

The Superbus: Public Transport of the Future?

The Delft University of Technology in The Netherlands has developed the Superbus as a concept for public transport that uses high-speed road vehicles.

The Superbus (below) is only one metre high to maximise aerodynamics and is electrically powered. Passengers would order a seat on the bus via their mobile phones and be able to board rapidly from a pick-up point no more than a mile from where they summon the bus. The basic idea is to offer point-to-point transport that is able to compete with cars and high-speed trains.

The vehicles drive at high speed on dedicated infrastructure, so-called Super Tracks. The vehicles drive at normal speeds on existing roads. Utilising geothermal heating, the tracks would store heat in the summer and release it during the winter to avoid icing up.

Former BMW-Williams Formula 1 designer Dr. Antonia Terzi has been employed to design the Superbus, so it's no wonder it looks more like a futuristic sports limousine than a brick with wheels.

Professor Wubbo Ockels of Delft University: "This is a vision of environmentally-friendly public transport of the future."

A demonstration model is currently being built to be unveiled at the start of the Beijing Olympics next year.

- Superbus.tudelft.nl

Poles Go to Polls Over Controversial Road

Poland will hold a referendum in its northeastern region on whether to build a controversial road through an environmentally protected area. Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski said the dispute between the government and environmentalists had become a "national problem."

The European Union has warned Poland not to build the road through the Rospuda Valley. The area of almost untouched peat bogs and woods borders on Lithuania and is considered unique in Europe.

"According to law, this controversy can be solved in one way only: by asking the opinion of the residents of the region," said Prime Minister Kaczynski. Critics claim the vote is merely a ploy to disavow responsibility for the decision to build the road.

The project to build a trans-European highway through the area predates Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. The EU Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas, said the project would mean a "major catastrophe in this precious area of Poland."

- Viabalticainfo.org

New Rule Targets NYC Critical Mass

The New York City Police Department now requires parade permits for any roadway procession of 50 or more pedestrians or vehicles. Anyone without a permit in such a group is now subject to arrest. The new rules went into effect on February 25 despite fierce opposition from the public, media, and NY Civil Liberties Union. Calls for a public hearing went unheard by the NYPD.

The controversial new rule is the latest of NYPD's ongoing attempts to inhibit and punish New York City's monthly Critical Mass bike ride, which first attracted the ire of authorities when it coincided with the Republican National Convention in August 2004.

City Councilmember Rosie Mendez promises to overturn these rules in City Council: "I believe that the NYPD's continued attempt to regulate our free speech is unnecessary and continues to infringe on our First Amendment rights..."

[P]ermits should not be conditioned on an unreasonable and arbitrary number and they should definitely not be required by groups who stay within the limits of the law."

- **RZ**



The Dutch prototype Superbus – the shape of public transport's future?

Superbus.tudelft.nl



Legambiente.it

Inside Out

Italy's largest nonprofit environmental organisation, Legambiente, says that new cases of malaria are being reported in Italy for the first time since 1970. Sandwiched between temperate Europe and African heat, Italy is on the front line of climate change and is witnessing a rise in tropical diseases such as malaria and tick-borne encephalitis.

"Illnesses are arriving from Africa, while tropical animals and plants are attacking our biodiversity, droughts and flooding are on the rise, and semi-desert areas are appearing," said Legambiente's director, Francesco Ferrante. "We are at the southern edge of the globe's temperate area and that is why Italy is being particularly hit by the collapse of the climatic equilibrium."

Legambiente is fighting climate change in many ways, including efforts to get cars off the streets. One new poster campaign demonstrates how the air inside a car is much more polluted than outside. The ad shows how dirty a white t-shirt becomes because of the smog in contrast to the clean band where the seatbelt was.

The caption reads: "*In auto respiri fino a 5 volte più smog che fuori. Comincia a fare a meno.*" (Inside your car you inhale 5 times more smog than outside. Start to make [drive] less.)

Making Tracks

Timed to coincide with the UN's climate change report [page 8], a group in Manchester, England decorated the pavements (sidewalks) outside flight centres, petrol stations, supermarkets and a Hummer dealership with painted carbon footprints.

Roughly a dozen stencils appeared in various city centre locations. The stunt followed a

number of other awareness-raising actions in Manchester, such as the blockade of a Hummer dealership a few weeks earlier.

- Indymedia.org.uk

UCB Says OUT to BP

Believing that oil company sponsorship of university research compromises scientific objectivity, students and faculty at University of California Berkeley turned out *en masse* in a series of teach-ins and protests critical of a proposed \$US 500 million sponsorship by multinational petroleum giant BP. At the heart of the deal is a plan to genetically engineer grass and microbes to produce ethanol at UC Berkeley, one of the nation's premier research facilities.

- Berkeleydaily.org

Balloons! Coffins! Bears! Let's Go to a Car Show...

If you want to make a difference, go where change is needed. For carbusters, that means car shows (aka motor shows and auto shows), the very belly of the beast. Here's a sampling of recent actions at shows around the world.

Want to get in on the fun? Visit carshownews.com to find one near you!

SWEDEN - Gothenburg's branch of Friends of the Earth and The 4X4 Network infiltrated the Gothenburg Motor Show with hundreds of cheery yellow balloons bearing an important environmental message. Best of all, the messengers were children who had received the balloons at the entrance to the show.

The activists quizzed showgoers on their way in: "Did you know that if you caught the CO₂ emissions from a new car in this balloon, you'd have to stop and change balloon every 60 metres?"

Most did not know. So they were given the balloon reminders, which children found delightful. The balloons bore the message: "60m by car = this much CO₂!"

The balloons popped up all around the show, like dandelions on a lawn.

USA - First staged in 1999, the Chicago Auto Show SHUTDOWN Festival is the largest car show counter-propaganda event in North America. This year marked the 8th edition of the festival.

The spokesperson of the SHUTDOWN festival was Snowball the polar bear, who issued statements that mixed cuteness, humour, and a little bit of menace. (Polar bears are quite large, after all.)

See more at autoshutdown.org

BELGIUM - More than 40 mourners dressed in formal black attire and bearing a coffin and wreath staged a funeral at the Brussels Motor Show to lament the lack of more ecological transport options. The protest was organised by 4x4info, a group that targets 4x4s (SUVs) but whose messages and tactics apply to all cars.

The strong visual and thematic impact of the protest drew media attention away from the show. In the words of one organiser: "We were in the radio news all day, the TV news on all the big channels and also the French-speaking Brussels TV station. We managed to hijack almost all the media attention which was to have been given to the start of the motorshow."

- Indymedia.be

SWITZERLAND - Showing that they're only neutral when it comes to international affairs, Swiss police demonstrated their loyalty to big business by arresting 10 demonstrators seeking to protest the Geneva Motor Show.

In a e-mail statement sent shortly after his release after eight hours of police questioning, Jeroen Verhoeven, Coordinator of the 4x4network, wrote: "[We were] phone-tapped, handcuffed, strip searched, DNA and fingerprints were taken, and video cameras, laptops and mobile phones were seized by the Geneva Police. The disproportionate character of the measures taken to prevent a non-violent action gives reason to question the underlying motive of this intervention of the Geneva Police."

The lesson learned? Have impartial legal observers on hand to serve as witnesses to any action.

- 4x4network.org



4x4info.be

Upset about Offsets

Three activists from London Rising Tide barricaded themselves inside the London headquarters of the Carbon Neutral Company, one of the leading private enterprises promoting carbon offsets as a way to mitigate damage caused by emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. The protest took place to highlight the damage that offset companies are doing by promoting climate complacency to the general public.

The action was spurred by the Carbon Neutral Company's chairing of England's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change. Rising Tide occupied the offices of the Carbon Neutral Company as a statement against the CNC chairing a committee, which Rising Tide sees as a clear conflict of interest and puts the CNC in a position to promote an approach to climate change — selling offsets — which has no quantifiable efficacy and which in the end could do more harm than good by offering an illusory “solution” to global warming.

Tony Gordon, who took part in the occupation, said, “Offset companies are selling consumers peace of mind about climate change that just shouldn't exist. The whole idea of offsetting is a throwback to the sale of indulgences to guilty sinners in the middle ages — both patently ridiculous and ineffective.”

The occupation came the day after the publication of *The Carbon Neutral Myth: Offset Indulgences for your Climate Sins*, a report highly critical of the offsets industry. It argues that the purported climate benefits of such programmes are impossible to quantify and that the projects are imposed on communities in the global South with little consultation and dubious results.

Outside, people from LRT unfurled a banner reading “carbon offset = climate upset” and symbolically swept coal under a piece of carpet to symbolise the “effectiveness” of carbon offsets.

- Londonrisingtide.org.uk

What the... Shell?

On February 3, 20 nature lovers smeared oil over the photographs at the London Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibit. Why would nature lovers do that? Because the show is sponsored by Shell Oil, a company documented to have devastated wildlife habitats around the world through the extraction and production of oil and gas.

Protesters squirted a benign oil-like substance on the glass covering the photographs to call attention to Shell's “painfully transparent” attempts to greenwash its reputation via cultural sponsorship.

Participant Dan Baker said, “This is not an attack on the work of the photographers. Shell does not deserve to have its name associated with their beautiful images.”

- Shelloiledwildlife.org.uk



This is Snowball, the talking polar bear. She lives near the Arctic Circle, where the ice is melting and thus many of her friends are dying.

“I'm coming to the Chicago Auto Show to deliver a message from the polar bears: Please help save the bears - Stop Driving,” she said.

Autoshowsutdown.org

Cold Turkey

Meltem Parlak writes from Turkey: “The first Carfree Sunday was celebrated on one of the much used street in Istanbul by the host organisation of the Towards Carfree Cities VII conference, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and Traffic Safety Association, closed Abdi İpekçi Street on February 18 with the support of Sisli Municipality, Suat Ayöz Traffic Victims Association and Turkish Disabled Association.

“Despite the cold weather, the event was fascinating. Children played on the street in safe, everybody rode around on bicycles, drew on the street and walls with colourful chalk, bands played and everybody danced. There was also a soapbox on the street where anybody could speak about carfree lifestyle. The event allowed people to see their street the way that could be fewer cars.

“‘Carfree Sunday’ event will be on every third Sunday of the month in the same street and different places of Istanbul.”

- **Meltem Parlak**

BikeTakeOver

As the website itself claims, the purpose of BT (www.biketakeover.com) is to get more bicycles on the streets, day and night, and to have fun doing it.

It's basically a collective that brings existing bike subcultures together to organise events and bicycle advocacy. It encourages the individuals to organise action themselves, creating what they want out of life, not standing by waiting for instructions.

You just have to login as a user and you can plan the events, collaborate with folks, share skills, organise events, promote them and make it work. The event criteria is that they must be bike-themed or related and for free or at least low or a benefit. This website is focused just in working locally, in the city of Austin.

Throughout BT they organised the so-called Nomadic Cinema & Free Bike-In Movies, that consists in presenting weekly bike-in movies at various locations across Austin, from dusk till midnight. All screenings are 100% free. It's partly about getting you out on your bike at night,

partly getting you to realise that the value of entertainment isn't based on how much you spend on it, and partly about creating strong, alternative economies and social networks within capitalism. In the act of consuming, we often oppose everything else we believe in.

- **Anna Domenech**

A New Big Bang is Coming

BUND (the German branch of Friends of the Earth) found a way to protest for climate change that has been quite successful in Germany.

How it works: Someone puts a globe balloon with the message “The world can't take anymore CO₂” on a car's exhaust pipe. When the car is started, its emissions inflate the balloon and make the message readable for a moment to passersby until it becomes too full and pops — bang!

You Can Quit Driving

Outraged and amused by the Canadian Cancer Society's *Driven to Quit* contest — which offers an automobile as a prize for quitting smoking, thereby replacing one dirty habit with another — Toronto's Streets are for People! have come up with a contest of their own: The *You Can Quit Driving Challenge*.

The entry form is an informative eight-page .pdf which treats driving the same as any other addiction — with tolerance, understanding, inspiration and practical tips for curing oneself.

- Streetsareforpeople.org



Illustration: Kelsey Carrierre

Civil Affairs Institute / Instytut Spraw Obywatelskich

If you thought rural Poland was just about sausage, coal mining and cabbage, it's time to get over the stereotype.

It's true that Poland isn't well known abroad for its beautiful natural areas and fascinating rural cultural heritage, but perhaps that's a good thing — at least if you're looking to avoid the crowds and visit somewhere authentic.

New for 2007, the World Carfree Network member organisation Civil Affairs Institute (Instytut Spraw Obywatelskich, or ISO) has set up the country's first nonprofit ecotourism programme, so you can now have a friendly, guided visit to see the best of what Poland has to offer.

"The basic idea is to show our country to people from abroad — not just mainstream tourism such as Krakow but the lesser-seen places with a backpack and without a car," explained project manager Agnieszka Gorczynska. "Basically this is for people keen on visiting nature and discovering secluded, natural places and parks."

"The funds go directly to our campaigns, not into our pockets," she added. "Thanks to this project we promote the beauty of our natural and cultural heritage, but we also learn to become financially independent from grants. The proceeds go to our Rospuda Valley campaign and help protect valuable places."

"Not only do we travel through natural places, but we initiate discussions on nature protection and environmental activism among the participants. We have chosen cozy and warm places to stay — mainly mountain cabins and agri-touristic houses — so that people can experience the spirit and culture of the region. We try to leave as little impact as possible in the places we stay."

ISO organised a pilot ecotourism trip in October 2006 with members of the Swiss group IG 22 September, also a World Carfree Network member organisation, after Gorczynska met them in May that year at the network's annual meeting. This pilot trip served to provide feedback on the itinerary from the perspective of foreigners, one of whom was writing her thesis on ecotourism.

This year the group is offering 14 trips from June to October, in the most attractive regions of Poland. Trips range from 4-10 days, with four different options:

1) a 4-5-day trip combining cultural highlights and alpine adventures in the Beskid mountains. This is a "soft" trip, meaning that participants don't carry backpacks but are transported by minibus. However, it's a combination of sightseeing, hiking and ethnographic exploration of Poland's cultural history and heritage.

2) a 7-day trip in the Beskid Zywiecki range in southern Poland, a natural area relatively untouched by human activity, "with mountain beech and spruce forests and water in streams is so clean that you can drink it without boiling," says Ecotourism.org.pl. "Many wild animals live there, including red deer, lynx, and even wolves."

3) a 7-day trip in the Pieniny and Beskid Sadecki ranges in southern Poland, a picturesque area covered in Carpathian forests and with traces of two cultures: Polish mountain dwellers and the Lemko ethnic group.

4) a 10-day trip in the Suwalki area of northeastern Poland, the country's "green lungs." It's a region of lakes, grassy hills, and vast pine forests near the border with Russia, Lithuania and Belarus, famous for its beautiful landscapes.



BM, Ecotourism.org.pl

Now that the itineraries are set, the focus is on promotion. In February this year at the Reisepavillon Tourism Fair in Hannover, where ISO's ecotourism project had a stand among the 300 exhibitors from 30 countries, there was lots of interest in Poland and in ecotourism.

"Another way we promote the programme and find participants for the tours is to work with the German travel agency Polentouristik, which formally agreed to be a partner and to book trips," Gorczynska said. "Also we have several partners listed on the website and we hope people come across our link through them. Sometimes we get e-mails from people who find us that way. Also we have friends abroad who leave our leaflets at universities and public places."

ISO was founded in December 2003 as an outgrowth of the former organisation Citizens' Ecological Movement. Many of the same people are still involved, but the new name emphasises a broader focus, promoting civil society, media awareness, social integration and youth participation, as well as the previous focuses on transport and the environment.

In addition to managing the ecotourism project, Gorczynska herself is in charge of several other projects at ISO: organising film viewings for citizens of Lodz, organising workshops for young people to activate them in setting up and running associations, and promoting good solutions for sustainable transport in big cities, in cooperation with the Norwegian group Natur og Ungdom (Nature & Youth), which was found through World Carfree Network.

On the theme of transport and urbanism, ISO coordinated the European Carfree Day/Mobility Week in 2004, 2005 and 2006. As national coordinator they produced materials and organised promotion through leaflets, television commercials and radio spots.

"We try to get well-known personalities to do the TV spots," said Gorczynska. "In 2004 we used a really well-known and well-liked man who is in charge of a big event to raise money for children in need, including those injured in car accidents. In 2005 we had a well-known newscaster saying 'You can leave your car in the garage — today we're walking, cycling and taking public transport.'"

"We also made some audio announcements that were broadcast in train stations. For example: 'You can read, you can rest, you can chat... You can get lost in your thoughts. You can — because you're not driving, you're taking the train.'"

ISO is also a key partner in World Carfree Network's three-year Visegrad Publications Project, which publishes and distributes relevant books and resources in Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian — the languages of the so-called Visegrad countries.

Thanks to this collaboration, by next summer you could be sitting around a campfire in the Beskid mountains with a Polish copy of *The Carbusters Reader* in your hands. - **RG**

For ISO's ecotourism programme, see <www.ecotourism.org.pl>. ISO's main website is <www.iso.edu.pl>. Agnieszka Gorczynska can be reached at <gorczynska@iso.edu.pl>.

Reminders of just how car-centric the world is today are everywhere, including two-year Johann's preschool classroom. The youngsters jangle toy car keys while singing about trouble starting the ignition. But Johann's family lives carfree. While the rest of the children recognise the song's theme and are having fun, Johann seems lost. "He's not familiar with cars," says his mom. "It's just weird."

We at World Carfree Network look forward to the day when classrooms are filled with Johanns — when carfree is a household word, not driving is normal and overdependence on automobiles is just weird. You can help **make this a reality!**



Ten Ways to Fight Car Dependence

1. Join World Carfree Network.

We have four membership levels for individuals: Limited Income/Student, Advocate, Supporter, and Saviour. Each of them includes a one-year subscription to Carbusters, and most include other gifts. For details, see p. 30 or <www.worldcarfree.net/join/individuals.php>.

2. Help an Autoholic kick the habit with a gift membership to Autoholics Anonymous. Members of Autoholics Anonymous follow a one-year, 12-step plan to cure their addiction to the automobile. This programme is currently being piloted in the UK and membership materials are specifically aimed at British motorists. The cost of membership is £9.95. Join or buy a gift membership at <www.autoholics.org>.

3. Subscribe to Carbusters

magazine. Keep up to date on the carfree movement, with a one year subscription to our quarterly magazine for only 16 EUR. You can also subscribe to our monthly e-bulletin on <www.worldcarfree.net/bulletin>.

4. Advertise the virtues of a carfree lifestyle. Wear one of t-shirts, put a carfree "bumper sticker" on your bicycle or turn a regular stop sign into one that urges motorists to STOP DRIVING. START: WALKING! BIKING! USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT! These

carfree promotional products and many more are available through our Resource Centre online at <www.worldcarfree.net/resources>.

5. Shop through our Resource Centre for books, videos and more. The WCN Resource Centre sells a variety of books and other resources for carfree living. Visit <www.worldcarfree.net/resources> to view our online catalog and place an order.

6. Volunteer with WCN. We have many opportunities for volunteers! If you are aged 18-30 and from one of the participating countries, come spend a year interning in our Prague offices through the European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme. If you aren't eligible for EVS but still want to help, we can use volunteers in our Prague offices and throughout the world. Visit <www.worldcarfree.net/projects> to see what interests you and contact one of the project coordinators.

7. Ask your local library to subscribe to *Carbusters* and spread the word. Most libraries fulfill patron's requests, so this is a great way to reach new readers!

8. Plan a World Carfree Day event. Events take place in cities all over the world on September 22 each year. For resources on planning a World Carfree Day 2007 event in

your city, e-mail <info@worldcarfree.net> to request a guide.

9. Become a Carbusters distributor.

If you own a business, work for an environmental nonprofit or just want to help us increase the circulation of our magazine, order issues in bulk and sell them. To become a distributor, e-mail us at <editors@worldcarfree.net>.

10. Collaborate with other carfree activists. Engage in a global exchange of ideas, and participate in discussions with carfree activists across the globe by joining our online forums and discussion lists. Visit <www.worldcarfree.net/listserve> to join a variety of carfree discussion lists.



Thank you for supporting World Carfree Network!

Confessions of a Polar Bear Killer

by Charles Montgomery

On one level, it was heartwarming to see climate change scientists and activists gather to tackle the crisis of the century in Bonn this winter, despite the ongoing hostility of the Bush regime to the Kyoto plan. But as a travel writer, I couldn't help feeling a pang of guilt by association when I thought of all those hundreds of right-minded scientists, activists and negotiators jetting home at the end of the week.

Picture the climate campaigner on her way back to Vancouver, my hometown. She's gazing out the window at the withering troposphere, full of legitimate worry and purpose. She is also, almost certainly, feeling a nagging sense of hypocrisy, because she knows what I have recently learned: that we spew as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere on a transcontinental flight as we would if we drove a Hummer to work for the entire year.

This is the dirty secret of the airline industry. Air travel is one of the most efficient means of frying the climate. Like car engines, jets emit carbon dioxide. But that's only the beginning of the problem. The harmful nitrogen oxides they release have a much more powerful effect at high altitudes than they would on the ground. And those lovely vapour trails that jets leave behind in the sky? They fluff into heat-trapping, ozone-bashing cirrus clouds.

Travelin' Man

Last January, a climate scientist freaked out a crowd at the European Parliament with a PowerPoint show featuring a view of the British Isles from space. The image looks like it has been scratched apart by a feral cat, so plentiful are the contrail lines crisscrossing it.

Today's commercial passenger planes are no more fuel efficient than their equivalents of fifty years ago. A study for the European Commission found that aircraft travel currently causes from 3.5 to 7.4 percent of global warming emissions. Those figures are expected to double within 50 years. No wonder the EU is considering a new tax on jet emissions.

Anyway, like I said, I'm a travel writer. I've made my living convincing people to squeeze their bums into economy seats on sun-bound airliners. I have told people that travel is good for them — good for the world, too, as long as we spend our money with the locals, rather than at Club Med. And for spreading this good news, I've been treated to all kinds of what you might call benefits: free flights, hotel rooms, surfing lessons, all-you-can-eat brunches and hundreds of umbrella drinks. The sun, the sand, the little adventures in places with impressive names like Malakula or Ixtacchuatl. It has been a good life.

But a guy can't digest the bad news about air travel and continue to feel noble about this business. It's one thing for me to jet about. It's quite another for me to lobby thousands of people to follow my bad example. The carbon loads grow exponentially. So does the guilt. So a few months back, I decided to give the junkets a rest and spread the no-fly message.

Stop flying, I told my fellow Canucks. Your Canada does not include Cancun. Stay home!

It didn't work for most of my family and friends, nor my readers. In fact the guilt trip didn't stop me from flying, either. Fortunately, some soft environmentalists have proposed another way around travel guilt. We can do what negotiators for wealthy nations have been doing all through the Kyoto talks: Buy our way out of guilt.

The Cost of Carbon

As Richard Kinley, acting Head of the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat put it: "Carbon now has a market value." Although the central players are loathe to admit it, Kyoto's international emission trading system enables nations to buy and sell the right to pollute. Under the agreement's clean development mechanism, Canada can keep right on polluting with a clean conscience if we simply invest in green initiatives in other countries. The math may be tricky, but the effect is soothing.

The same sort of arithmetic is now being applied to individual

polluters. Dozens of websites offer carbon offset programmes (Davidsuzuki.org offers a list) which allows you to calculate just how much CO₂ your jet-setting will spew.

Some sites will also sell you a package of credits to make up for all that pollution. The idea here is that you "negate" the impact of your emissions by absorbing carbon from the air, or by avoiding the release of greenhouse gas elsewhere. Maybe you'll be buying solar kitchens for poor Senegalese, or tree planting schemes in the Amazon. Either way, carbon offsets can be quite effective at replacing travel guilt with the warm fuzzies.

These offsets are becoming *de rigueur* among the jet set. The Rolling Stones declared their 2003 tour "carbon neutral" after they cut a deal with the UK-based Carbon Neutral Company (then called Future Forests). The Stones apparently bought enough forest to suck up all the emissions associated with nine tour dates in the UK and North America — including the 13 kilograms of CO₂

each fan would blow en route to the concerts.

The Gold Standard

So let's reconsider that winter vacation to Cancun. According to the Carbon Neutral Company's calculator, my portion of the 5,564-mile round trip from Vancouver to Cancun will produce 2,206 pounds of CO₂. But for only \$11.21, the company will plant a tree on my behalf, and declare my flights just as carbon neutral as the Stones' tour.

Travel companies are jumping on the bandwagon. Natural Habitat Adventures, which offers polar bear viewing tours, recently admitted that flying folks up to the Arctic would contribute to the melting of the ice cap that polar bears like so much. In response, the company allows clients to calculate their trip's greenhouse gas costs and buy a special ticket to fund projects that will "negate" those costs.



Jed Dunkerley

This seems, at first, to be a terrific deal. But I checked with folks in the climate-saving business, and it turns out that many are having second thoughts about carbon offsets. Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace refuse to sell them. The David Suzuki Foundation offers a list of offset programmes, but doesn't endorse any of them.

What's Wrong with Offsets?

First of all, not all of them are necessarily effective. Investing in new forests, for example, may suck up some of that carbon in the short term, but who's to say that forest won't be burned or cut down in the future?

Paul Lingl, a climate campaigner with the Suzuki Foundation, says that because of these concerns, scientists and NGOs have come up with a rating system for assessing offset programmes. Only projects that focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency currently get the Gold Standard nod.

Sounds good. The green energy sector sure could use the help competing with Canada's heavily-subsidised oil and gas industry, which gets \$1.4 billion in tax subsidies each year.

But Lingl stops short of encouraging us to hop that flight to Cancun armed with green energy-funding carbon offset tickets. The guilt-o-meter is still humming. He says there remains an inherent problem with these voluntary offset programmes. They let industry — and travelers — off the hook. They encourage us to keep polluting in the dirtiest ways.

There's no way around it, Lingl says: "The worst thing we do to the environment is use cars and planes for travel. So the best bet for saving the climate is to vacation close to home."

But even a climate warrior like Lingl admits that there is some redemption to be had by cutting a middle path: We can feel good by taking fewer — but longer — holiday trips. And we'll feel positively righteous by limiting the distance of our trips. The Baja Peninsula is a few tonnes of CO₂ closer to my town than Cancun, for example. Better still, I could take a bus or train, the most climate-friendly ways to travel short of walking or biking. Amtrak can get me from Vancouver to sunny San Diego in a day and a half.

In an age of discount air shuttles, we have come to see such languid journeys as a shocking waste of time. Getting there, once considered half the fun, is now an ordeal to be minimised. We devour jet holidays like junk food, gobbling McWeekends with little thought for Monday's bad air.

Just as we have begun to regain the pleasures of slow food, perhaps it is also time to embrace slow travel, and let getting there reclaim its place as half the fun.

I can see it now: the fields and forests drifting past the windows of the dining car, the rails winding south, and the blue, blue sky, with one less contrail streaked across it. 🌱

Gold certificate



I, Carbuster, have voluntarily pledged to limit the flights I take. Except in the case of a personal or family emergency, I promise to take no flights in the year beginning April 2007.

Infrequent Flyer Card

The Flight Pledge Union wants you to fly less

The Problem

Air travel is the fastest growing contributor to climate change — over the period 2002-2050, the overall carbon contribution of air travel to climate change is expected to increase from 3.5% to between 6 and 10%. And while that may seem a relatively small percentage, high altitude emissions do 2.7 times the damage as those emitted at ground level.

Forecasts from the UK government indicate that almost 500 million passengers annually will pass through British airports by 2030, one billion by 2050 and one and a half billion ten years later — up from 32 million in 1970, and 190 million in 2002. It is a global trend.

The Flight Pledge Union <Flightpledge.co.uk> focuses on air travel instead of cars because greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft have doubled from 20 million tonnes in 1990 to 40 million tonnes annually today. Despite this, aircraft are exempt from the Kyoto provisions. Private cars are responsible for about 70 million tonnes (and are included in Kyoto), but the warming effect of aviation is almost three times greater than that of its CO₂ emissions alone. Therefore the impact of flying is much greater than the CO₂ volumes would indicate.

Despite these trends, governments do nothing to constrain air travel. Airport owners are encouraged to expand their operations and aircraft fuel continues to be free of all fuel duties or taxes.

The Pledge

A single round-trip flight can have as much impact per passenger as a year of driving. If you've already reduced driving to a bare minimum, the next big step is to fly less. The Flight Pledge Union offers encouragement and a tangible reminder to help you limit the number of flights you take each year.

There are two pledges: gold and silver. If you sign the gold pledge, you promise to take no flights in the coming year, except in a personal or family emergency. If you sign the silver pledge, you promise not to take more than two return short-haul flights, or one return long-haul flight, in the coming year — again, except for an emergency.

The Flight Pledge Union targets frequent, casual, short distance, short break, leisure flights — flights that are only possible because they are cheap; flights that are disproportionately polluting because most of the fuel is used getting to cruising height and then almost immediately landing; journeys that can easily be made by rail or coach.

And it's not just personal and business travel. The number of air freight flights is growing at an even faster rate, increasing 9% annually. In the globalised marketplace, more goods are traveling farther and faster than ever before. What you buy can make as big a difference as where you fly. In an encouraging move, Tesco, Britain's largest supermarket chain, will begin labeling the amount of carbon generated from the production, transport, and consumption of all 70,000 products it sells. Ignorance will no longer be an excuse for not making responsible consumer choices.

It takes less than a minute to generate your pledge certificate at <www.flightpledge.org.uk>. - **RZ**

Sark, Channel Islands

The island of Sark is a carfree zone, where the only vehicles are horse-drawn vehicles, bicycles, tractors, and battery-powered buggies or motorised bicycles for the elderly and disabled. The airspace over Sark is a no-fly zone.

Oberlech and Zermatt

Two carfree alpine resorts, in Austria and Switzerland. They function year-round with a combination of aerial cable cars and horse-drawn and battery-powered vehicles. Oberlech uses a tunnel system for goods delivery.

Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a 2,174-mile marked hiking trail in the eastern US, extending from Georgia to Maine.

The Toronto Islands

Just 15 minutes by ferry from Toronto, the islands are the largest carfree urban community in North America. There is much to do here: walking, cycling, boating, a beach, playgrounds, a farm and an amusement park.

Pacific Crest Trail

Completed in 1993, the PCT is 2,650 miles long, connecting Mexico to Canada via the highest portions of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges. To hike its entire length takes about 3-4 months.

Portland, Oregon

Portland has arguably done the most to promote livability and curb car use of any city in North America. Host of the Towards Carfree Cities VIII conference in 2008.

Black Rock City, Nevada

Though not strictly carfree (some "art cars" are permitted), this temporary city of 30,000 — home to the annual Burning Man festival — is extremely bike and pedestrian friendly. It's a showcase for innovative and creative human-powered transport solutions. www.burningman.com

Amtrak

Amtrak connects most major cities and offers the most luxurious and relaxed way to travel across the USA. Monthly and regional passes available. www.amtrak.com

Fes, Morocco

With 156,000 residents, the walled city of Fes is the world's largest carfree city (in population). Only donkey and handcart traffic is possible. With its sights, sounds and smells, Fes makes for a memorable experience. Most Moroccan and Tunisian cities still retain the walled carfree areas, called medinas.

Bogota, Colombia

Every Sunday from 7 am to 2 pm, 120 km of arterial streets are closed to car traffic and opened up to the people. More than 1.5 million people bicycle, run or skate each week in what is called the Ciclovía. The city also plans to become largely carfree during rush hour by the year 2015.

Slow Boat to China

Find info and links to cruise and passenger-carrying cargo ship lines serving all the world's oceans at www.seat61.com.

Ilha do Mel, Brazil

The entire Island is carfree, and even goods and materials are carted around on donkey barrows. The economy is traditionally based on fishing, but ecotourism is now an important part. 95% of Island is an ecological reserve connected by two-metre-wide sandy paths.

Curitiba, Brazil

Twenty blocks in the heart of the city are paved with decorative tile in which vehicles are not allowed. Delivery trucks at set hours, pedestrianised in the 70's, the historic district. It is served by a bus system running on dedicated street lanes at a low-cost service.

Got 30 minutes? That's how long it takes to circle the globe in orbit. Take a ride with us on the *Carbusters* satellite as we quickly survey interesting carfree destinations.

And since getting there is half the fun, we also zoom in on some of the options for covering a lot of ground without leaving giant ecological footprints.

Amsterdam

A bike lover's dream. The Venice of the North, its wide canals and narrow streets do as much to discourage cars and encourage bikes as does its flat terrain. Couple this with a comprehensive public transport system and copious intercity connections. Plus the Dutch probably have the suavest bike style in the world. Learn from them.

Trans-Siberian Railroad

The best way to cross the Russian hinterlands.
<www.seat61.com/Trans-Siberian.htm>

Venice, Italy

The Amsterdam of the South? Not quite — you won't find any bikes here. Pedestrians rule in what is the world's largest carfree city (in area, not in population).

Dubrovnik, Croatia

1,000-year-old walled city on the Adriatic Sea. At first you think, "How quaint — walls." Then you see the bullet holes from fighting in the 1990s when the city was once again under siege. Another thing the walls and narrow streets repel is the automobile.

Dayan Old Town, Lijiang City, China

Called the Venice of the East. And like the Italian Venice, cars are prohibited here. Given the close-knit network of cobblestone paths, bridges and canals, driving would be impossible anyway. Located at the confluence of historic trade routes, tourism is now the dominant economic activity.

Rishikesh, India

Walk the winding streets and paths and the only motion of transport to whiz by you would be human-drawn carts or a gang of miniature horses. Meat-free, alcohol-free and carfree because it's holy.

Lamma Island, Hong Kong

The third largest island in Hong Kong is carfree. Residents walk, via an extensive and well-maintained network of trails. Ferries take residents to and from the two largest settlements to the rest of Hong Kong. Another well-known urban carfree island, Gulangyu, is found opposite Xiamen.

Lamu Island, Kenya

Kenya's oldest living town is carfree, relying mainly on donkey transport. It's an enchanting, popular tourist destination.

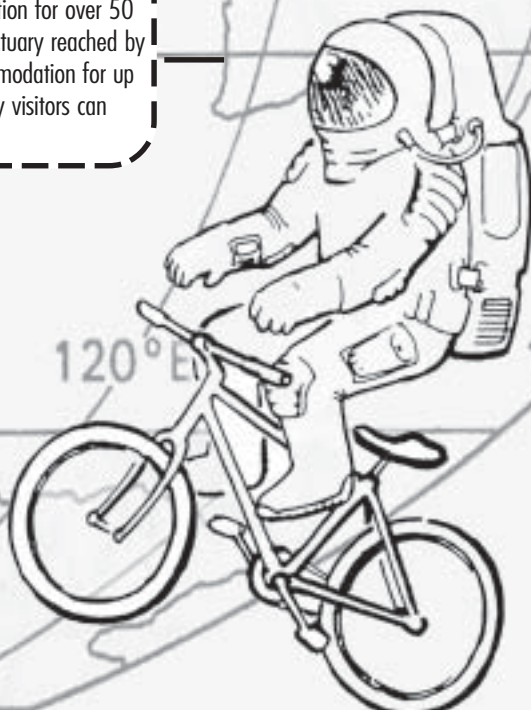
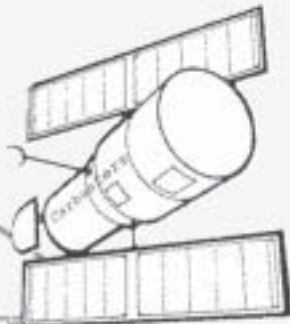
Rottneest Island, Australia

A popular carfree tourist destination for over 50 years, Rottneest is a wildlife sanctuary reached by ferry from Perth. There's accommodation for up to 2,850 visitors, while day-only visitors can number up to 5,000.

Want to see the world on two wheels? The International Bicycle Fund offers package tours which support their planetwide bike advocacy: <www.ibike.org>.

Antarctica

World's most carfree continent!





Welcoming Walkers

Walkability becomes a selling point for Hebden Bridge, England

On Sunday February 18, the West Yorkshire town of Hebden Bridge held its launch event for becoming Britain's first municipality with the Walkers are Welcome status.

The idea for the Walkers are Welcome national designation came from Hebden Bridge as well. According to <www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk>, "In summer 2006, Hebden Bridge Walkers' Action first proposed the idea of an accreditation scheme which would permit Hebden Bridge, and other towns, to officially announce that 'Walkers are Welcome'." They were inspired by the example of Garstang, Lancashire, which became the first Fair Trade Town, a concept that has since spread to over 100 towns and villages.

Hebden Bridge — a town of 4,500 residents known for its progressive, environmental and artistic leanings — will in effect be the Walkers are Welcome pilot project. This began with a local petition drive in September 2006, and on October 2 organisers crossed the threshold of 250 signatures. On October 4, the Hebden Royd Town Council formally endorsed the initiative, followed by other local authorities. This included a commitment from Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council to fund the creation of three sign-posted footpaths from the centre of town.

The next step was to send letters to local businesses — shops, hotels, B&Bs and pubs — to ask for their support in promoting the concept. Several agreed to display window stickers and some donated money to the project under a Business Supporters plan. The nationwide Ramblers' Association also gave a generous donation, and its chairperson Kate Ashbrook spoke at the February 18 launch event.



Everything old is new again: Hebden Bridge capitalises on its walking heritage.

It should be pointed out that the criteria necessary to become a Walkers are Welcome town are not exactly stringent. However, once a municipality is designated as Walkers are Welcome, the council must ensure that all pedestrian rights of way in the parish are maintained in a good condition. Whether the streets of the town itself are to be maintained in a pedestrian-friendly state is an open question.

In that regard Hebden Bridge has been moving in the right direction:

- Saint George's Square, the town focal point, was pedestrianised and "cobblestoned" in 2006, along with two adjacent streets, Bridge Gate and Crown Street.

- The 33-mile-long Rochdale Canal, fully restored in 2002, runs along the edge of Hebden Bridge town centre. The canal's adjacent footpath now provides a carfree greenway connecting all the nearby towns.

- Hebden Bridge and the surrounding area are well served by train and bus.

Hebden Bridge makes a nice carfree tourist destination, popular for its funky atmosphere, compact and lively town centre, accessibility by rail, and proximity to the Hardcastle Craggs National Trust Site and the Pennine Way long-distance walking path.

If you're in the UK and would like your town to be accredited with Walkers are Welcome status, see <www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk> for more information. - **RG**

European Bicycle Touring Made Easy

Touring Europe by bicycle keeps getting easier. It's getting to the point where very little preparation is necessary. Quick visits to a few websites, a good bike, and decent local map is all you need. Increasingly, even the map is optional. Marked route systems and information boards in almost every town make village-hopping across Europe fun and easy for even the most spontaneous (or least prepared) rider.

Signed local and international bike routes and greenways, national certification systems designating bike-friendly businesses and accommodations, and integrated public transport make cycling Europe a dream. And there are options to fit every budget.



Cykliste Vytani – Bicyclists Welcome

Maybe because they had to start from scratch, the Czech Republic's new *Cykliste Vytani* (Cyclists Welcome) programme serves as an exemplary model for catering to bike tourists.

Participating restaurants, accommodations, campsites, and points of interest (signified by a decal) are certified according various sets of criteria which include providing to cyclists necessities such as secure covered bike storage, basic tool kits, and comprehensive guides to local cycling routes and services. Although the list of requirements for each type of establishment is rigorous, more than 1,000 businesses were certified by the end of 2006: 547 accommodations, 361 restaurants, 49 campsites and 53 tourist destinations.

Certified establishments are marked on tourist maps and can be searched by name or location at CyklisteVytani.cz, which offers information in English, German, and Czech. The project will soon be replicated in Slovakia and Poland.

Similar programmes can be found in Croatia (www.bicikl.hr), Denmark (www.visitdenmark.com), Germany (www.bettundbike.de), Hungary (www.happybike.hu) and Switzerland (www.velotel.ch).

Go Greenways

Greenways everywhere are transportation corridors conducive to non-motorised travel, but Western and Central/Eastern Europe are different when it comes to the particulars. In the West, greenways are completely separated from motorised traffic and meet certain technical criteria as to width, slope, surface and accessibility for the mobility impaired. In Central and Eastern Europe, many greenways meet these standards, but others are simply marked road routes which may bear light motor vehicle traffic. In both cases, greenways offer cyclists a chance to explore at a relaxed pace. Learn more at <Visitgreenways.org> (West) and <Visitgreenways.com> (East).

EuroVelo Unites Europe

EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, is a project of the European Cyclists Federation to develop 12 long-distance cycle routes crossing the whole continent of Europe. The total length of these routes is over 60,000 km, of which more than 20,000 km is in place. See <www.ecf.com/14_1> for more info. - **RZ**

On the Right Track

Since moving to Seattle from New York by train in 1998, *Carbusters* contributing editor Robert Zverina has done almost all of his long-distance domestic travel by rail. "It requires a bit more time and advanced planning," he says, "but the train ride is an end in itself, not just a means to a destination. In a sense, time stops on a train. There's nothing to do but be present with yourself and fellow passengers." The following are excerpts from train-related entries in his online photo journal <www.zverina.com>, continually updated since 1997. "Sarah" is his mate and travel companion.

Thursday December 31, 1998

After a late night in the smoking car we barely made it to lunch where we met a stylin' older guy named JC. He showed us a picture from a trip to Alaska: a tranquilized polar bear in back of a pickup, its fur spotted red where the dart had gone in. "If you really want to see polar bears up there, the best way is to hire a cab to take you to the dump," he said.

Monday October 30, 2000

Riding the Empire Builder east I ask the conductor, "Is this the line where they used to shoot buffalo?" "Yes. This was it." Three of us look out the window, seeing ghosts. Objects in the foreground tend to blur and in their rapid dark passing you can imagine the herd. It took only four years and then they were gone to make way for beef, the bones sold for buttons, horns for trophies. Powerlust and greed, half the world's grain goes to cattle feed while we are forced the lie that we have to live high atop the food pyramid, growing addicted so a handful can profit.

Saturday December 15, 2001

We board at night in Minnesota cold, sleep badly, then a day of nothin' to do but stare out the window. My shoelaces are bright yellow, too long, untied, and trail behind me. A little girl follows me from car to car, stepping on them, giggling each time she manages to stop me. I ask her, "How would you like it if I stepped on your face?" Gee whiz, that is not a very nice thing to say. When did I become such a mean old man? I have the rest of the continent to ponder that question and a propped pillow for napping when I can't find the answer.

Thursday December 19, 2002

The train stops for a smoke break in Whitefish, Montana. A few rogue snowflakes flutter and fall as we stretch our legs on the platform. I see James, who I first met in October '98 on this same train when I moved out west. Yesterday, we were surprised to see him and wife Nan in King Street Station; their couchette is just one down from ours. We eat breakfast with a 41-year Oregon fishing veteran; his dad had done 50.

Back in our room, we draw the curtain and get naked, just one of the many advantages of traveling this way. Mountains, plains; horses run from the sound of the train. A cattle skeleton lies where it fell — why move it? It could be Africa because I'm reading Hemingway. I imagine myself living out here, renting out colorful heavy equipment all day, then hitting the bar. One could probably go good and crazy without much interference.

Friday December 19, 2003

There are no words out here in the Montana flatlands so we peck some out on the Smith-Corona "super silent" portable manual typewriter I brought. The slapping of keys goes with the turning of wheels — how many more times will that combination be heard in the 21st century? Poem after poem, Sarah and I take turns until there are 40.

And when we're bored of that we read, trading books when they're completed. I start with *All Men Are Mortal* while Sarah burns through *The Bell Jar*. The first is about a man who cannot die and thus whose every action feels empty. The other is about a young woman who goes crazy and tries to end it all. Suicide and immortality, the train rolls on.

Monday October 4, 2004

Nothing beats the feeling of settling into a train seat for a cross-country ride. The journey is longer but there's very little waiting in line and unlike air travel since 9/11 there's no invasive security check and they let you hold onto your knife. There's nothing between me and my destination — Charleston, South Carolina — but an autumn continent and time. The train is a bubble of tranquility and calm. The sun burns bright and low over Puget Sound as we slip out. Coach class is half empty and aside from couples everyone has two seats to themselves, good for spreading out or curling up for a nap. It's quiet and dark but for reading lights and the pages they illuminate like wings in the night. Like a library on a rainy day, we're neither here nor there, with nowhere to go but the next page.

Tuesday October 5, 2004

The retired divorced sports fan talks up anyone who'll sit still long enough to listen. I'm not listening, I'm eavesdropping — there's a difference. The people he traps into listening are victims; I'm just an earwit. The elderly couple he's caught this time are patient but look around, as if seeking an escape route from the lounge car.

The husband of the couple says he used to show up for work an hour early so he could have time to enjoy his coffee. The bore says for some reason he never liked getting out of bed. That much of what he says makes sense.

Thursday October 7, 2004

After a good night's sleep on the redeye from Chicago to NYC, I had a couple of hours at Penn Station in midtown Manhattan before switching to southbound Silver Meteor. Minutes before departure, watching the board for my gate, a dude approaches

and says, "Nice shirt." It's a red "One Less Car" Transportation Alternatives tee (a gift from Sarah, who used to volunteer there when she lived in NYC). "Do you know the organization?" I ask. "I'm the executive director!" He gives me a bunch of postcards to promote a carfree Central Park event.

Saturday December 17, 2005

I've never woken up in outer space. I sure would like to. Until that day, I'll settle for sunrise views from the train.

Monday December 19, 2005

Because the train was about five hours late, we missed our connection to Pittsburgh and had to stay overnight in Chicago. Amtrak was accommodating. They gave us \$30 each for food and put us up in the Hyatt Rosemont, a 30-minute drive northwest of Union Station. They chartered a bus with Church of God of Christ written in gold letters on the side and we joked that we were being taken to a Christian re-education camp.

Train riders are a special breed. Maybe just sheep. Despite being given a day-long delay, everyone just laughed when the hotel turned us away. You see, there are *two* Hyatts in Rosemont and our driver had taken us to the wrong one. We resumed our seats on the bus and he took us to the correct one just a mile away. The next day, the bus to take us back to the station was late. Luckily, Tex from North Dakota took the initiative and asked the front desk to call over to the *other* Hyatt. Sure enough, the bus (with a different driver) was waiting there.

Thursday December 29, 2005

I hadn't seen snow in two years. It was pleasingly sticky and Sarah and I threw snowballs on the platform while we waited for the "all aboard!" Boarding a train is the best feeling.

Monday October 30, 2006

From South Carolina to Minneapolis we got to see Autumn spread out in all her glory, from the green leaves, conifers, and palm trees of southeast Atlantic coast up through the mountains and river valleys to the north, resplendent with orange and gold, the midwest... (days pass) ... Crossing from St. Paul, Minnesota across the Cascades we drop down into sunshine, snowcapped peaks and rising mist among evergreens and deciduous trees; green, gold, water, snow, naked rock, trailer parks. It was cold and sunny at the end of the line...

We hugged and kissed. 🐻

Ecotopia Biketour: The Journey Is the Reward

Alive and kicking, the oldest bike tour in Europe celebrates its 17th birthday

by Ivan Gregov

Besides truck drivers, gypsies and prostitutes, who chooses to live on the road? For over 15 years the Ecotopia Biketour has attracted fans of cycling and sustainability from across the globe to do just that, creating what some call a “sustainable *mobile* community.”

In the early '90s, people involved with European Youth for Action (EYFA) wanted to travel to summer activist camp Ecotopia (eyfa.org/ecotopia) by the most sustainable means possible. So Ecotopia Biketour was born. EYFA-Amsterdam organised it for more than a decade. In 2004, World Carfree Network took over support of the project.

This is not the only summer bike ride in Europe, but a few things about it are unique. The group makes all decisions by consensus. All members share daily tasks, like cooking or pulling the trailers. And EYFA's innovative *Eco-rates* allow participants to pay daily expenses according to their country's economic standard, which makes the tour equally affordable no matter where people are from.

A Wild Tour

The 2005 tour, *Rivers Don't Know Borders - Neither Do Bikes*, was beautifully chaotic: We slept in Bosnian hotels with no doors or windows, joined a sljivovica-drinking party with locals on a rainy afternoon in the hills of Serbia, were invited into the house of a German peasant in the Carpathian Mountains (Romania) to dry off after a rain storm (they happened often), jumped into a bizarre Romanian wedding party in the middle of the night, and shared spur-of-the-moment tea times with numerous town and village representatives.

On the other hand: our members were attacked by robbers on several occasions, cycled through deep mud left after floods in Romania, endured several accidents and rode through still-communist Moldova with a police escort. It is a pity the Moldovan president, who was aware of our group, didn't invite us for a tea — maybe next time. The chaos is partly explained by the fact that we had no organiser on the Romanian stretch, the longest leg of the tour. Instead of being grumpy, we simply rolled with it and enjoyed the spontaneity. All in all, we had a quite unique chance to interact with local people and to learn cultural and political differences better than in other recent bike tours.

And a Polite One

Contrary to Biketour 2005, the Bike It Yourself tour (2006) was well organised but less spontaneous. With six country coordinators, volunteers and World Carfree Network staff working together, accommodations and

social engagements were arranged in advance.

For the first time, Ecotopia itself was at a mid-point along the route, not the final destination. We cycled through Lithuania and Poland to reach Ecotopia in Slovakia, then continued through Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. It turned well and shifted Biketour towards being a slightly more independent project, an end in itself.

As we approached Ecotopia, more than 45 colourfully clothed cyclists huffed and puffed up the steep hills, including 20 participants from the former Soviet countries of Russia, Armenia and Moldova. Most of ex-Soviet people were unfamiliar with cycling, so the rest of the group helped them overcome conditions that challenged even the more experienced bikers. The Easterners felt a great sense of accomplishment and took that enthusiasm home with them to start new projects in countries where cycling is not common.

A baby trailer was a welcome addition to the standard cargo trailers

when two mothers joined us during the second half of the trip. Despite some fighting and crying from the babies, it was a successful experiment. The babies on board attracted more media coverage.

Actions are always an important part of life on the tour. In 2006, Biketour teamed with Greenpeace to protest the Via Baltica motorway through the Rospuda Valley in Poland and



Ecotopia Biketour 2006 riders jump for joy at a mountaintop stop.

to oppose uranium mining in Slovakia. We also assisted local organisations with Critical Mass rides in most towns along the route.

Ecotopia Biketour is sustainable travel *par excellence*. Most of the countries can be crossed in only a few days. Cyclists carry all luggage on bikes with trailers without support vehicles; on rare occasions some participants take the train. Food is found locally rather than carried and wasteful packaging is avoided.

Where to Now?

Ecotopia Biketour 2007 departs from Barcelona in early June. The route will follow the ancient Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage route through the northern hills of Spain and into southern Portugal, where Ecotopia 2007 will take place in Aljezur from August 4-19.

After several rainy summers, we expect this time to cope with extremely hot weather and adapt to new conditions once again. With the twilight of the climate as we know it, Biketour will again demonstrate one possible way of enjoying a summer holiday without a negative climate impact.

Biketour welcomes cyclists of all abilities — no Spandex required! So pump those tires and oil your chain. Join in anywhere along the route for as long as you like.

Check out <www.thebiketour.net> to find out where to catch us and what to bring. See you on the road. 🚲



RAGBRAI!

10,000 Riders, 500 Miles, 7 Days...

by Dan Strack

Every year during the last week of July, the *Des Moines Register* newspaper puts on a week-long bike tour called RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa), covering a distance of 400-500 miles (the route changes each year). Daily rides are 50-100 miles and end in designated host towns where riders camp out. RAGBRAI was started in 1973 by two reporters who wanted to experience Iowa in a different way. Thanks to their media connections, the ride was an instant success and has taken place every year since. Currently about 10,000 people register every year. All 50 US states and 30 countries were represented last year.

When RAGBRAI rolls into a town, it brings a party with it. Locals stand on the roadside and wave. Kids squirt the riders with hoses as they pass. Some residents offer their yards and showers for riders. One can reserve a yard in advance or make use of the general campsites. Most towns set up stages and have bands play. Plenty of beer is sold and consumed. My biggest complaint is overabundance of bad, cheap beer. On the other hand, food is plentiful. I was happily surprised to find vegan burritos and sloppy joes. Most of the food is served by restaurants that set up tents and follow the ride. Local restaurants and organisations also set up tents. It has to be the most action some of these towns see all year. Definitely a boost to the economy; everyone seems happy in the end.

The route follows country roads that are closed to vehicles and are managed by state patrol officers. Iowa is filled with rolling hills and farmland. Food and drinks are sold from stands along the way. Water is everywhere. Wind, hills, rain, heat and the occasional pig or chicken farm stench are the main obstacles that you might face. Riding across farm country in the hot sun for a week turned out to be one of the best escapes from the everyday grind for me. There were times when all of my thoughts and energy were focused on riding and everything else was pushed aside. It was good for my body and mind and it's something that keeps bike riding a priority in my life. 🚲



For the Record

The following testimonials were collected at the Bikeworks.org fundraising auction on March 16 in Seattle. Bikeworks' mission is to build sustainable communities by educating youth and promoting bicycling. They teach young people how to fix bikes, reward them with their own set of wheels, take them on trips, and provide affordable bicycle services to the community.

Twelve miles! It seemed too far. That was the distance of the ride along the first section of a newly completed bike trail. They were cutting the ribbon on this magical path that would take me farther than I had ever ridden on my bike.

I decorated my Schwinn 3-speed with multicoloured spokes and ribbons and pedaled off to the starting line with hundreds of other excited cyclists.

Little did I know that I'd end up pedaling around the world.

A life's passion has to start somewhere.

- Anonymous

A repetitive lesson of riding the world: there is an inverse relationship between wealth and generosity.

Recently in Vietnam we had a long day on bikes, starting at 6 am. Five hours and 50 miles of mountains and dirt roads later we needed lunch. We found a lone house that looked like it served drinks and snacks.

We asked, "Do you have food-rice?" The answer was an emphatic, "Come on in and sit down." Before we could get our bikes parked, they started bringing out bowls of soup, plates of noodles, and vegetable dishes; followed by all the iced tea you could drink. We stayed an hour. During that time no one else arrived for whom the feast might have been intended and there was no business or industry in the area that might have created a "lunch crowd."

To cap the paranormal event, our Vietnamese hosts wanted no money.

- David Mozer, Bikeworks Board & www.ibike.org

With bike touring sometimes the "where" doesn't matter anymore - it's the going, the moving, the riding.

- Tina Bechler, Bikeworks Program Director

After a very hectic ride along increasingly busy roads leading into Marrakech, we stopped in Tamelelt, seeking an ATM and lodging for the evening. With neither available, we decided to eat and re-fuel for the remaining 50 km to Marrakech.

The cafe owner was proud of his beautiful tajine offerings and we selected the largest, given our situation. With empty plates and full bellies, the cafe owner informed us that this size tajine normally served five or more people! When he learned why we ate so much, he invited us to spend the evening with his family in their home nearby. We happily accepted.

- Katie Pencke & Dan Boxer

City Bikes

Residents and visitors alike benefit from 21st-century automated bike rental.

by Daniel Mourek

City bike programmes are an outgrowth of the community bicycle programmes first devised in Amsterdam in the 1960s. [See *Carbusters* #7 - ed.]

While these Yellow Bike or White Bike programmes sought to provide free bicycles for temporary use within specified areas to provide environmentally friendly transport options to citizens, most were done in by theft, vandalism, or lack of funding.

While the 1960s ideal of free bikes works in some places today, viable city bike programmes have for the most part evolved security and funding systems that require some combination of deposit, registration, and fees. So they might be now more accurately called automated bike rental (though in some places under certain conditions it can be free).

The bikes have become more sophisticated, more robust, more resistant to theft and ready to carry extra luggage. The hire systems still differ not only in the rental conditions but also in the philosophy. Some are run like social enterprises, such as in Switzerland (e.g. <www.bernrollt.ch> or <www.zuerirollt.ch>). Elsewhere, it's closer to a typical rental scheme (e.g. in Barcelona, <www.bicicletabarcelona.com>). In other cases large credit card or smart card operators and advertising/urban furniture companies such as JCDecaux have invested into these systems, resulting in large, visible programmes offering hundreds of bicycles for immediate use, 24/7.

Today you can find bicycle rental programmes running in many cities throughout Europe and North America. Because there are so many, let's have a look at some of the automated systems in places that are not so typically bicycle friendly. The systems described



Using the Cyclocity automated bicycle rental system in Lyon, France. Below left: A close-up of a Cyclocity bike.

below are also widely used elsewhere and continue to extend to new places.

We have tried to compare each system based on criteria monitoring the simplicity of use, cost of hire, number of bicycles and stations available, etc. After a careful consideration and some personal experience with these systems, we believe that all of them are contributing to improving the image of every-day urban cycling and providing valuable connections to public transport systems, whether used by locals or visitors.

It is obvious that all of the evaluated systems have some advantages and disadvantages. The biggest disadvantage is that, except in Prague, the rental/lock-up hubs are limited to the city centres. The quality of the bicycles varies greatly too, from robust and comfortable German, French and Belgian bicycles to less comfortable city bikes in Vienna and Prague. While all these systems require payment for rentals longer than one hour, in some places short trips are free. Free time of use varies from 15 minutes in Prague up to an hour or even longer in Vienna.

Of those systems surveyed, the best overall is the Vienna city bike system, which offers 900 bikes in 53 stations in the city centre. The system is simple to use and inexpensive, but the bikes are not of high quality. The best bikes can be rented in Berlin and Brussels, but of course one pays a premium for that privilege. The best deal for long-term hire is in Prague where, again, the bikes aren't the greatest.

We present these systems both to educate future visitors and to inspire and inform similar systems where none exist. Altogether all cities

supporting the city bike systems as part of public transport are winners. It is slowly becoming a European standard and the city bikes are also spreading to the United States.

Brussels

This system now has 250 bikes at 23 stations, to be expanded to 750 bikes if the system is successful.

There are two registration options available:

- long-term card: annual membership with credit card ("bankdomiciliëring") payment. 10 EUR per year. Rates: 0.50 EUR for first half hour of bike use; 0.50 EUR per add. hour of bike use.
- short-term ticket: for 7 days, you pay via credit card at the stop and you get a ticket with a code. Money will be taken from your bank account after the 7 days.

Users register on the website Cyclocity.be, at the office of JCDecaux, via telephone or at the bike station (for system B).

You can get a bike at automatic stations in the city centre, 24/7, for a maximum period of 24 hours. User must be at least 14 years old and owner of a Cyclocity card.

The Cyclocity.be website includes a map of all bike station locations.

cost:

- first 30 minutes: 0.50 EUR
- add. 60 minutes: 1 EUR

finest:

- lost/damaged anti-theft-system: 10 EUR
- lost/damaged Cyclocity card: 5 EUR
- late return of bike: 50 EUR
- theft of the bike: 150 EUR



operator/sponsors:

Cyclocity is a bike rental service offered by Brussels city and managed by JCDecaux Belgium, a company that provides urban "furniture" that contains advertising space, like at bus stops. So, one drawback of the system is that you might become a rolling advertisement.

more info:

www.cyclocity.be

Barcelona

Barcelona started a new public bike rental system in March, called Bicing, with the aim of facilitating short and practical trips in the city.

This year the city will install 200 bike stations, each holding 15 bikes. By the end of the year, 3,000 bikes will be available.

To rent a bike, you need to buy a card that costs 1 EUR for a week or 24 EUR for a year.

The maximum time you can rent a bike per day is two hours.

How it works: you go the bike station and unlock a bike using your card. Your trip must end at another bike station, where you must lock the bike. Normally these parking stations are situated near metro and train stations, universities and public car parks, because the city wants to improve connections between transport modes.

cost:

- first 30 minutes free
- add. 30 minutes: 0.30 EUR

The service will be closed the nights from Sunday to Thursday from midnight to 5 am.

Barcelona has 128 km of bike lanes, with 22 km more to be added this year. The number of bicycles in the system will double from 7,500 to 15,000.

Other cities including Stockholm, Lyon and Oslo already have this system. Surveys show that the average trip is 15 minutes and 2.5 km.

more info:

www.bcn.es, www.bicing.com

Prague

The Homeport system currently 30 bikes (equipped with baskets) at 17 stations near the city centre close to office buildings and public transport, in the district of Karlín. In April, 77 new bikes will be added in Prague 4.

You can register in person or online. Then you receive a card via mail. It's a pre-paid credit-based system, so you must buy about 20 EUR of credit before renting. On the website you can also track the history of your rentals and recharge your credit. You can find a map of bicycle locations on the docking stations or online.

The Homeport docking station is a self-contained locking device with a built-in keypad and display. To use the system, hold your card against the display, type in your PIN, choose an available bike, wait for the authorisation and then release the bike. Returning your bike is quicker, as you don't have to do type in your PIN.

cost:

- first 15 minutes free
- about 1 CZK/minute
- 15-30 minutes: approx. 0.35 EUR
- 1-2 hours: 1 EUR
- up to 1 day: approx. 4 EUR
- 2-3 days: approx. 7 EUR

finest:

200 EUR, if bike not returned within 72 hrs.

operator/sponsors:

Karlín Real Estate Group is the main sponsor.

Other sponsors include Europolis, Dial Telecom and Ahrend.

more info:

HOMEPORT s.r.o.

Thámová 18, Prague 8

tel: +(420) 721 620 820

helpdesk@homeport.info

www.homeport.cz

Vienna

Using the Vienna Citybike system requires a one-time registration via Internet, via telephone, or in person at any of the 53 stations around the city. It costs 1 EUR (but goes towards your rental credit). It takes about 10 minutes to fill in the forms, which are in German and English. The Citybike Card is the best solution for regular users with an Austrian bank account. For visitors there's the Citybike Tourist Card, available at tourist centres for 2 EUR/day.

After registering, you will get a personal client number with which you can take your bike from the box indicated on the display. When you are returning the bike, make sure it is securely locked so that you are not being charged extra.

There are currently 900 bikes (equipped with baskets) at 53 stations around the city centre near public transport. You can find the locations via a computer display, which is a drawback because often the terminals are occupied. A small printed map at each location and in the metro and elsewhere would be a help.

cost:

- first hour free
- second hour: 1 EUR
- third hour: 2 EUR
- fourth hour: 4 EUR
- each add. hour (max. 120 hrs.): 4 EUR

finest:

600 EUR, if bike not returned in 120 hrs.

operator/sponsors:

Citybike Vienna is a project of Gewista Werbegeellschaft m.b.H., Liffaßstraße 6, 1030 Wien, www.gewista.at.

more info:

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kontakt@citybikewien.at

www.citybikewien.at

Paris Embraces Plan to Become City of Bikes

Paris is for lovers — lovers of food and art and wine, lovers of the romantic sort and, starting this summer, lovers of bicycles. On July 15, the day after Bastille Day, Parisians will wake up to discover thousands of low-cost rental bikes at hundreds of high-tech bicycle stations scattered throughout the city, an ambitious programme to cut traffic, reduce pollution, improve parking and enhance the city's image as a greener, quieter, more relaxed place.

By the end of the year, organisers and city officials say, there should be 20,600 bikes at 1,450 stations — or about one station every 250 metres across the entire city. Based on experience elsewhere — particularly in Lyon, France's third-largest city, which launched a similar system two years ago — regular users of the bikes will ride them almost for free.

"It has completely transformed the landscape of Lyon — everywhere you see people on the bikes," said Jean-Louis Touraine, the city's deputy mayor. The programme was meant "not just to modify the equilibrium between the modes of transport and reduce air pollution, but also to modify the image of the city and to have a city where humans occupy a larger space."

The Socialist mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, has the same aim, said his aide, Jean-Luc Dumesnil: "We think it could change Paris's image — make it quieter, less polluted, with a nicer atmosphere, a better way of life."

The Lyon rental bikes, with their distinctive silver frame, red rear-wheel guard, handlebar basket and bell, can also be among the cheapest ways to travel, because the first half-hour is free, and most trips are shorter than that.

"It's faster than the bus or metro, it's good exercise, and it's almost free," said Vianney Paquet, 19, who is studying law in Lyon. Paquet said that he uses the rental bikes four or five times a day and pays 10 EUR a year, half for an annual membership fee and half for rental credit that he never actually spends because his rides typically last just a few minutes.

Anthonin Darbon, director of Cyclocity, which operates Lyon's programme and won the contract to start up and run the one in Paris, said 95% of the roughly 20,000 daily bike rentals in Lyon are free because of their length.

Cyclocity is a subsidiary of outdoor advertising behemoth JCDecaux, which runs much smaller bike businesses in Brussels, Vienna and the Spanish cities of Cordoba and Girona. London, Dublin, Sydney and Melbourne reportedly are considering similar rental programmes.

- *Washington Post*, March 24

Studies & Reports

Personal Travel Drives Climate Change

Researchers at Oxford University pinpoint personal travel "as the main contributor of greenhouse gas emissions" and link income with personal carbon footprint. The study found that plane journeys account for 70% of carbon emissions in the UK. Car travel was the second largest culprit.

The study calls for immediate policy action on transport in relation to climate change, noting that transport is responsible for 26% of emissions in the UK and is the only sector where carbon emissions are predicted to continue rising in the period between now and 2020.

The top 20% polluters accounted for 60% of all emissions, while the bottom 20% only accounted for 1% of all emissions. In general, emissions from people who make over GBP 40,000 are twice the national average.

Professor John Preston, the project leader, said the study demonstrates important links between human behaviour and climate change. "This research helps us understand the extent to which individuals' travel patterns, their location and their social class make an impact on climate change through the carbon dioxide emissions created by their transport use."

- Scenta.co.uk

Pay-As-You-Go Mobility

The Victoria Transport Policy Institute reports that a "Pay-As-You-Drive" scheme could reduce average annual mileage by up to 15%.

Everyone wins in this scheme because reduction in driving will result in fewer accidents, limit pollution and congestion and save consumers money. The researchers point out that this can be especially valuable to "low-income motorists who drive significantly less on average and value opportunities to save money."

Pay-As-You-Drive (also called *Distance-Based* and *Mileage-Based*) pricing means that vehicle insurance, registration, taxes and leasing fees are based directly on the vehicle's annual mileage. The more you drive, the more you pay; the less you drive, the more you save.

Despite what most people believe, economic and environmental goals are not necessarily in conflict when it comes to transport, says the report. The study identifies 12 smart transport policy ideas they call "win-win transportation strategies."

To read more about the win-win concept and projected results of strategies developed under the framework, visit the institute online at www.vtpi.org.

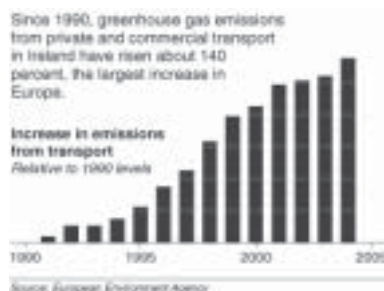
High Pressure System

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) reports that over half of the US scientists researching climate change have been politically pressured to censor their reports. The UCS conducted two complementary investigations and found "a need for strong policies to protect the integrity of science and the free-flow of scientific information."

Almost half of the 1,600 scientists from federal agencies who participated in the survey reported that the Bush administration instituted new or unusual requirements that hindered climate-related work. 150 of the scientists reported 435 cases of political interference in their work during the past five years, including censorship of studies proving that "human activity is driving climate change." Scientists were barred from speaking to the media, denied approval of press releases and even removed from climate-related research projects.

The study also found problems with the way that climate change science was presented to congress, resulting in inadequate federal funding to address the issue. The UCS reports that the "atmosphere of pressure" has eroded the morale of researchers at federal agencies, with 45% of respondents saying they are less satisfied with their jobs today than five years ago." Shortly after the report was released, EPA officials confirmed the accusations against the Bush Administration at a Senate Oversight Committee hearing.

Read the entire study and other information about climate change at www.ucsusa.org.



Cleaner Cars, Dirtier Air

Vehicular emissions are rising in nearly every European country and across the globe. Because of increasing car and truck use, greenhouse gas emissions are increasing even where pollution from industry is waning.

The 23% growth in vehicular emissions in Europe since 1990 has "offset" the effect of cleaner factories, according to a recent report by the European Environment Agency. The growth has occurred despite the invention of far less environmentally destructive fuels and cars.

"What we gain by hybrid cars and ethanol buses, we more than lose because of sheer numbers of vehicles," said Ronan Uhel, a senior scientist with the European Environment Agency.

- *New York Times*, January 7

Save Earth, Save Money

ICF International reports that households using public transit regularly save an average of over \$6,000 per year and collectively reduce US petroleum consumption by 1.4 billion gallons each year. Because of public transit, 300,000 fewer cars fill their tanks with gas each day, says the report.

Based on a decade of "dramatic increases" in public transport ridership, ICF projects that expanding public transport options could double ridership. This means that "total national fuel savings from public transport would double to 1.8 billion gallons per year."

The study highlights health, freedom of mobility and quality of life as additional benefits of using public transport. ICF concludes that public transport is "the smart way to cut household expenses and US dependence on foreign oil."

- lcfi.com

Better Service = More Riders

Thousands of Scots ditched their cars to go by train last year, reports Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (STP). ScotRail passenger journeys numbered an all-time high of 4.57 million in October 2006, up 9% from October 2005.

STP attributes the increase to better train service. 92% of trains arrived within five minutes of their scheduled time in 2006. The only time during the year that passenger figures fell was when a disruption to customer service occurred due to equipment malfunctions. This supports the conclusion that better customer service means more people riding trains instead of driving.

India Must Control Car Boom

In a study released February 15, The Centre for Science and Environment says India's state-sponsored car boom, with no efforts towards making cars more fuel-efficient, is inciting oil guzzling that the country cannot afford.

The report calls on the government to stand up to car industry demands for more tax cuts and expansion of their polluting diesel car fleet.

"India is in the grip of an impending energy crisis. We are consuming more oil than ever before, and the growing transport sector is guzzling a lot of this oil." At present, India has no minimum fuel efficiency requirements for the 1.5 million new vehicles sold there annually.

Read more at www.cseindia.org.

want to cut your car use?

Dear Anna

I am a disillusioned transport activist. Cars and their pollution, noise and danger dominate pretty much everywhere. I get ignored by local political leaders. I even find myself using a car more! Help me!

Yours,
Depressed

Dear Transport Activist,

It's true that cars and driving are increasing. In Britain there are over 33 million metal boxes, an increase of over 7 million in 10 years. But try to think positively and stay true to your higher values. Most people believe there is too much motorised traffic — over 55% of drivers surveyed in Scotland by Prof. Steve Stradling of Napier University. You are not alone in wanting traffic reduction. I can envision it and World Carfree Network members are working to make it a reality.

I recently saw the film *The Secret* <www.the-secret-dvd.net>. It proposes a Law of Attraction which asserts that human intentions will become manifest. Like Alladin's genie, "your wish is my command."

Intention has three aspects:

- 1) asking or desire
- 2) answering or belief that it can happen
- 3) receiving or accepting the outcome

Visualise your surroundings and local streets being more pleasant, safe, quiet, and smelling sweeter. Try to turn your attention to not moving around so much and to travelling sustainably yourself.

With regards to politics, the best approach is to present arguments for positive alternatives: better cycle provisions, traffic free paths, walking networks, safe routes to schools, slower road speeds, congestion charging/road pricing and carfree developments. I was delighted to hear that Portsmouth Council has a rolling programme for turning all residential areas into 20 miles per hour zones rather than the national urban speed limit of 30 mph.

They plan to do this not with humps or signage, but thorough community consultation. In The Netherlands there is consensus across all political parties to have a national road charging scheme. Where there is a will, there is a way.

If your political leaders really are the dark grey shade of asphalt and so intransigent that they can't be swayed by rational arguments for win-win alternatives, then you must put your efforts into helping your favoured candidates gain votes. Have you thought of standing for election yourself? Could you rally support? You'll do best if you are in a group (or many green transport groups) for mutual help, fundraising and to share skills. Marketing a positive message is crucial. The psychology of how minority groups get heard by the mainstream is that they must have a simple message and keep repeating it. Eventually people will listen and understand your point of view.

As to your own need to cut your car use, you really must try to be a role model to others! This is important because you must practice what you preach. Successful traffic reduction involves staying local, reducing distances and travelling more sustainably.

The most crucial transport decision of the day is the first. So make sure that when you leave home most days it is by using your own legs, bike or at least sharing a lift with someone else. Tell yourself, "I am so happy and grateful that I can move by my own power." Put up pictures of yourself looking great on a bike or walking. Try to be prepared with all the right information and gear so that the green options are the easiest, cheapest and most convenient. They will always be the healthiest and most interesting.

Stay put more by getting goods and services by phone, Internet, e-mail, text, delivery or *en route* to where you will be. The main trick is to live locally. If



just call ANNA

distances are relatively close then travelling by your own power or public transport won't take long and will be invigorating. Being carfree is a lifestyle which entails more than our choice of transport when we must travel; it is a decision related to where we choose to live and work.

Keep telling yourself what you are gaining, and reward yourself when you do succeed. In a report called *Painting the Town Green*, Stephen Hounsham concludes that to engage people in green actions, it is best if there is a fairly immediate, tangible, personal, close to home, pragmatic benefit to the individual.

Can you think of a transport project that would raise your spirits and bring personal satisfaction?

Perhaps offer a public ride to show people around the newest cycle routes in your town?

Or maybe set up a table in town and give passers by free information on alternative transport and pledge cards to take away?

Ask yourself: What would be both effective and fun? Set achievable goals. Focus on small actions and keep your expectations realistic.

Good luck and stay positive! 🍀

Anna Semlyen is the author of Cutting Your Car Use. 95,000+ UK copies sold. It has North American and Welsh editions. If you want to write a version for your country, contact john@greenbooks.co.uk or visit <www.cuttingyourcaruse.co.uk>.

This issue, we take a different approach to our book reviews. For one thing, we're no longer simply calling them "reviews"; we've changed the heading to "book club". Why? Because we hope to inspire discussion and community around the ideas in the books we suggest, whether or not we agree with them 100%. To get things rolling, *Carbusters* contributing editor Robert Zverina and frequent writer Sarah Kavage, being a carfree couple since meeting eight years ago, look at a couple of books about carfree couples. This is a transcript of their conversation, conducted via instant messenger between bedroom and home office. Ah, 21st century love!



Urban Camping: A Testament to Living without a Vehicle

Peter and Andrea Tombrowski
www.urbancamping.ca, 2006
ISBN 0-9735649-1-1

Better Off: Flipping the Switch on Technology

Eric Brende, Harper Perennial, 2004
ISBN 0-06057-005-9



Urban Camping: Peter and Andrea Tombrowski lived in rural Canada where their carpentry business was in the red. They sold their truck, paid off their debts, and moved to Calgary, a city of 1.1 million where they choose to continue living without a car or bicycles. This book is a detailed guide to how and why they do it.

Better Off: Eric Brende was a graduate student of technology at MIT who with his new bride decided to live for 18 months without electricity or motors as part of what he calls a "Minimite" community — a discreet Amish-like people living an agrarian life of traditional Christian beliefs and minimal technology.

- zverinar: One thing which struck me as we tried to set up this messaging session is how frustrating technology can be. Duh. It made me want to run away, which got me to thinking how both these books concern couples who relocate: Peter and Andrea move from a rural setting to pursue a better life (financially) in the city; Eric and Mary leave the city in search of a simpler life, one without electricity or gasoline.

- skavage: What stood out to me — when I think about the stories of these two other couples and compare them to our own — is that it's not just left-wingers thinking about these things. I mean, who knows what their political leanings are, but both of these other couples seem fairly socially conservative — religious, family people. But the whole examination of a technology-dependent lifestyle doesn't seem to be the exclusive provenance of ELF-style anarchists.

- zverinar: People are always searching for a better life, it's just now that more people are realizing that not only is technology not the answer, but maybe it's hindering their happiness. Both the Brendes and Tombrowskis are thoughtful and aware of their surroundings, which include technology, specifically the automobile. Reducing the stuff around them is seen as a means to a higher, perhaps more spiritual way of living.

- skavage: The Brendes in *Better Off* were, I think, really questioning the value of technology and so for 18 months moved into a very strict Amish-like community with no motors of any kind [*both couples do borrow cars occasionally* - ed.]. In their case, it was less financially motivated. The writer of the book, Eric, was working on a doctorate in

technology and so there was some academic motivation as well as just the personal desire. But after the 18 months they ended up in St. Louis where he pedals a rickshaw now. Not exactly an academic career, but as he notes in the beginning, his professors and fellow students were critical of his views. The Brendes were quite influenced by their experience with the Minimites; they transitioned to a simpler urban life — which,

“
The authors here not only examine the roles of technology in their lives, but they also act on those observations.
”

although they don't articulate it so bluntly, seems to be heavily focused on reducing car dependence. They also grow a lot of their own food, although they do use electricity and computers now.

- zverinar: Peter and Andrea concluded that living with debt was more burdensome than living without a car, so they sold their truck, paid off their bills, and moved to the city. Their apartment is small so they become very selective about what things they let into their lives. And it seems all their choices stem from the decision to make time with family a priority, so having no car and less stuff in general gives them time to nurture family relationships. They're offering their practical

experience for others who might find themselves in a similar predicament. I say predicament because they seem to have been pushed into the carfree lifestyle.

- skavage: They were sort of pushed into it, but I think a lot of people wouldn't have embraced that lifestyle change the way they did — or never even questioned the huge expense of maintaining a car and the sacrifices made to that kind of mobility.

- zverinar: They're definitely troopers. They sort of lucked into the joy. Getting rid of the vehicle was a practical step, a means to eliminating debt. But it also offered them opportunities they hadn't anticipated. Framing their lives as a sort of ongoing camping trip shows their positive outlook, and the book itself is styled after hiking guide books. It's a charming perspective. But I was a little disappointed by how Calgary as portrayed in this book. It could be Anyplace, an anonymous nowhere defined by the chain stores and restaurants which form the landmarks and destinations by which the authors navigate their needs and leisure.

- skavage: *Urban Camping* is almost like folk art — they have none of the standard vocabulary or connections to the larger environmental or carfree community, as far as I can tell. They seem to be an island. That's why I feel that, despite its shortcomings (like you said, they do a lot of chain store shopping and ignore how those places perpetuate the car-dependent lifestyle — but maybe they just don't see it) this book is a great carfree survival guide for suburbanites or people in areas that don't have cute, walkable neighborhoods.

- zverinar: And they're not preachy about being carfree. They're less concerned that others follow their example than they are with sharing their values and practices, take 'em or leave 'em. It's really practical in its approach, getting right down to the nitty-gritty of their clothes, packs, strollers. What's also amazing is they don't use bicycles. That heightens the book's appeal — a family of four getting by without vehicles of any sort (besides public transport). It shows it can be done. And besides its practical value and human interest (I was fascinated to hear the details of lives so different from my own), the book offers at least one really powerful observation: "Things take time." Any one thing you bring into your life now has a claim on your time — whether it's maintenance, cleaning, or just mental clutter, the things we think we possess possess us.

- skavage: In both books, the families really

consider their participation in the modern world seriously — whether it's the amount of stuff and where it comes from or how they get around. The Tombrowskis make a lot of their own clothes, equipment and furniture; and obviously, the Minimize community does that too in the case of the Brendes in *Better Off*. The one interesting difference between the two families is that the Tombrowskis just don't seem to really be part of a community — they made this whole transition without any kind of larger support network — and they still seem to exist without that. The Brendes had their neighbors coming over and saving their asses every other day, it seemed.

- zverinar: Maybe we are all tested to our abilities. The Brendes were like the Mayflower pilgrims, relying on the generosity of the natives to help them adjust to a new way of life. The Tombrowskis seem to relish their self-reliance. But I think that difference (community support or lack thereof) is really telling. The Tombrowskis have Internet, a proxy for community. And they have each other, a rather tight nuclear family. Some people just make that choice.

But I think capitalism uses technology to divide and conquer consumers. If 10 families use a washing machine collectively (as in an apartment or co-op), the manufacturer sells one machine. But if he can convince each family to get its own, sales increase by 1,000%. So, divided consumers buy more technology, and once the technology is bought, it divides people. Cars do this. Just look at any freeway and count the percent of single occupancy vehicles. So perhaps it makes sense that the Tombrowskis, in the technologized city, seem to meet fewer people and have less community connections than the relatively technology-free couple in a remote farming community.

- skavage: I do agree that technology is inherently isolating — by allowing you to be “self-sufficient” it undermines those relationships and any sort of sufficiency as a community.

I just read about a grad student that as part of her thesis is going back to 1950 technology — typewriter, rotary phone, etc. As technology careens along there will be likely more people writing/talking about how they use it or not — from a larger variety of perspectives and points of view. These two books just highlight that, perhaps?

- zverinar: One hopes so. The authors here not only examine the roles of technology in their lives but also act on those observations. If humanity is to strike a sustainable balance with ecology, more people need to notice the technology they've been taking for granted and shift their lifestyles to reduce their impacts. Books like these serve as inspiring examples of that and more would be welcome. 🐼



Walking the Beach to Bellingham

Harvey Manning, Madrona Publishers, 1986

ISBN 0-88089-018-5

Harvey Manning was a writer and editor of hiking guide books in the Pacific Northwest of the US. He was an outspoken advocate for preserving natural habitats and reserving them for pedestrian use only (no bikes or motor vehicles to disturb the peace with their rapid pace). In 1960 he was editorial lead for the textbook *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, which is still in print more than 40 years later. The success of that book launched Mountaineer Books, the gold standard for outdoor guide books in the region. He died on November 12, 2006 at the age of 81.

While the guide books he edited and helped write were utilitarian in their approach, his personality comes through most vividly in his only autobiographical work, *Walking the Beach to Bellingham*, an intimate account of two years spent walking the shoreline between Seattle and the city of Bellingham 150 miles north on the Puget Sound. An amalgam of many short walks collected into a continuous narrative, the book combines acute observation, local history, and even geology into a memoir and manifesto in praise of nature, soft travel, and a slower way of life. Plus it's funny.

The aboriginal peoples of Australia are known for their songlines, lengthy walking routes crisscrossing the continent in which the history of their people is stored, the landmarks signifying specific stories of their 50,000-year-old culture. In a sense, Manning here attempts to trace his own songline, revisiting the sites of his youth and the region's history while always bearing a reverence for the decimated indigenous tribes who occupied those shores for 12,000 years prior to white invasion. And beyond that he leaps across geologic time to ponder forces which shaped the land itself.

Without covering much distance he takes a very long walk indeed.

A Backwoods Bukowski

He also shares a little something with Charles Bukowski. Is it the beard? Is it the beer? No, the similarity is in the attention to detail and clarity of individual voice. Manning was not a granola-crunching new ager spouting spiritual platitudes. He was a straight-talking *hombre* who packed candy bars, Pepsi, and beer into his rucksack, saving the best (the beer) for last at the end of the day's journey, when he would meticulously log his rapid consumption of a six-pack or so while simultaneously taking notes on his surroundings, painting the scene in simple but evocative language laced with strong opinion.

In *Walking the Beach*, he is as thorough as Thoreau, itemising the minutiae of his backpack, his surroundings, and internal states. And as Thoreau claimed to have “traveled widely” in the small town of Concord, Manning's quest was “to learn a lot about a little.”

At journey's end he asks, “Was the end of the trip the sum of it?” It's a rhetorical question, of course. Manning knows the answer. It's worth reading the book to find out what it is. - **RZ**

Walking the Beach to Bellingham (excerpt)

The sport of peasant boys in the days of my youth was counting the cars of freight [trains] and waving to the engineer and fireman in the mighty black engine and the brakeman in the cozy red caboose. Passenger trains were our drama, windows flashing by with a blur of faces, the golden people of Hollywood movies, the mysterious East, skyscrapers, taxicabs, penthouses, night clubs, and luxury liners, the bright lights of the permanent party.

When I at last was invited east to join the fun, the nation had been Boeinged, Douglassed, and Lockheaded. The airplanes that filled the sky with their noise had shrunk the planet, giving the ahistorical specious adventures, the ageographical false perspectives.

Through the window
Of the big tin pot,
See the world
As the world is not.

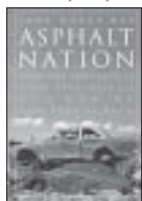
A plumbers' convention in Schenectady, Aunt Sally's goiter operation in Fresno, steak sandwiches with a fertilizer salesman in Houston, a swim in a heated pool in Omaha, a slot machine in Carson City, a fruit salad in Honolulu are solemnized by the passage through air. Thinking by altitude to achieve significance, by massing of miles to fill lives, the mobs herd into airports and are swindled. Train stations were exciting and docks thrilling; airports are simply saddening.

RESOURCES

Nonfiction

Asphalt Nation

How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back
Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages
EUR 20, £14, US\$23, AU\$32, or CZK 580



Asphalt Nation is a powerful examination of how the car has ravaged America's cities and landscape over the past 100 years, together with a compelling strategy for reversing our dependency. Demonstrating that there are economic, political, personal and architectural solutions to the problem, Kay shows that radical change is possible.

Carfree Cities

J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages
EUR 30, £21, US\$35, AU\$50, or CZK 890

An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, *Carfree Cities* outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life.

Car Busters Graphics Book

Car Busters, 1999, 44 pages
EUR 5, £4, US\$6, AU\$9, or CZK 150

Our graphics book brings together all the best graphics on file at *Car Busters* from the artists you see in the magazine. Includes information on how to produce attractive posters and leaflets. The graphics can be reproduced freely (for non-profit purposes) by activist groups for their leaflets, posters, newsletters, etc.

Car Sick

Lynn Sloman, 2006, 192 pages
EUR 19.50, £13, US\$25, AU\$33, or CZK 545

"Cars cause environmental destruction, provoke stress and tear the heart out of communities. *Car Sick* provides a page-turning account of how we got into this mess, and more importantly, charts an attractive way out. If you've got a car, read this book. It will change your views, and could change your life." - T. Juniper, Friends of the Earth



Critical Mass

Bicycling's Defiant Celebration
Chris Carlsson, editor, 2002, 256 pages
EUR 20, £14, US\$23, AU\$32, or CZK 580

An irreverent collection of inkworthy social critique and optimistic celebration. Forty-eight contributors document, define and drive home the beauty of a quiet ride with a thousand friends, the anarchy of grassroots inspiration, the fight for the survival of our cities.

Cutting Your Car Use (U.K. Version)

Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!
Anna Semlyen, 2000 / 2005, 160 pages
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, CZK 250

Britain's first ever personal traffic reduction guide. Packed with easy-to-follow, best practice advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give up the car completely. New updated edition.

Divorce Your Car!

Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages
EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27, or CZK 500
Divorce Your Car! speaks to individuals, encouraging readers to change their own driving behaviour without waiting for broader social change, stressing that individual action can drive social change.

Earth First! Direct Action Manual

DAM Collective, 1998, 152 pages
EUR 5, £4, US\$6, AU\$9, or CZK 150

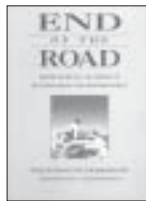
Ecocities: Building Cities in Balance with Nature

Richard Register, 2002, 296 pages
EUR 14.50, £10, US\$17, AU\$23, or CZK 425
This comprehensive volume is a feast of thoroughly researched information for concerned citizens, and presents an inspiring and specific set of tools for urban activists to use in shaping the future of their communities.

End of the Road

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, or CZK 250

There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport...



For Love of the Automobile

Looking Back Into the History of Our Desires
Wolfgang Sachs, 1992, 227 pages, hardcover
EUR 35, £25, US\$40, AU\$68, or CZK 1,180
Examining the history of the automobile from the late 1880s to the present, Sachs shows how the car gave form to the dreams and desires embedded in modern society and in so doing reshaped our very notions of time and space, our individual and societal values, and our outlook on progress and the future. In sum: an excellent and detailed cultural history of the car.

Life Between Buildings

Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages, fourth English edition
EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27, or CZK 500



First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. *Life Between Buildings* is the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

Making Their Own Plans

Brett Bloom and Ava Bromberg, eds., 2004, 128 pages
EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, CZK 325
A compilation of articles about concrete projects seeking to reconfigure an undemocratic, polluted, gentrifying city into a more just and livable place.

New City Spaces

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 2001, 263 pages
hardcover: EUR 50, £35, US\$60, AU\$80, or CZK 1,500

Through colour photos, descriptive text and diagrams, this informative book highlights 39 public spaces around the world that have been won back from traffic.



Public Spaces - Public Life

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 1996, 96 pages
EUR 32, £22, US\$38, AU\$50, or CZK 950
Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished.



Cutting Your Car Use (North American Version)

Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!
Randall Ghent, with Anna Semlyen, 2006, 128 pages
US\$12, CAN\$14.40

A practical car use reduction guide for the United States and Canada in a handy pocket-size format.



We Are Traffic!
+ Return of the Scorchers
On one DVD!

Fiction/Kids

The Age of the Bicycle

Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250
What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour...

Alice in Underland

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250
"A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairytale, which takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America."

Family Mouse Behind the Wheel

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages
hardcover: EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250
Colourful illustrated book teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences...



The Little Driver

Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250
A children's book for young and old, *The Little Driver* takes a fresh look at our obsession with cars through the eyes of a boy still young enough to take nothing for granted.

Carbusters Press

Bulk Discount: Ten or more CARtoons and/or Roadkill Bill books, any combination, for half price.

karikAUTury, GÉPregény, karikAUTury, and AUTOkomiks



CARtoons has been published in Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish with a new introduction by the head of the Czech NGO Children of the Earth. The books are part of the Visegrad Resource Centre project. If you are interested in copies contact project coordinator Steven Logan at <se_logan@worldcarfree.net>.

CARtoons

Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages, optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics
Book: EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250
CD-ROM: EUR 4, £3, US\$5, AU\$6.75 or CZK 80
A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's infamous graphics.

Roadkill Bill

Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, or CZK 250
It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. In *Roadkill Bill*, the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome cartoons are collected together for the first and only time. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok.



Not finding what you're looking for?

Our members/subscribers get a 10% discount at <www.detroitpublications.com> on over 130 books and other resources on transportation and urban ecology.

Videos



Source*

2005, 77 min., DVD, region-free PAL (plays on all PCs) - EUR 20, £14, US\$24, AU\$32 or CZK 600

The tale of the Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline is a tale of corruption, greed, and Western money flowing into the oil-soaked shores of the Caspian Sea. This documentary takes you to the source of Western oil dependency and the human results of oil policy.

The City Repair Project: Transforming Space into Place

2004, 13.5 min., DVD

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250

Highlights the incredible work of The City Repair Project in Portland, Oregon, USA, as featured in *Carbusters* #21.



Autoschreck

1994, German, PAL only

EUR 20, £14, US\$24, AU\$32, CZK 600

Michael Hartmann walks straight over the cars illegally parked on the sidewalk. A documentary about a man discharged from a mental hospital for being perfectly (or at least somewhat) normal.

We Are Traffic! & Return of the Scorchers



1999/1992, 50 min./28 min., NTSC

EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27 or CZK 500

Two classic biking movies now on one DVD, plus extra footage that didn't make it into the documentaries. *Return of the Scorchers* (1992, 28 min.) chronicles the history of the bicycle renaissance. *We Are Traffic* (1999, 50 min.) follows the grassroots Critical Mass movement, which has brought together complete strangers in an exuberant, commercial-free public space filled with creativity & unpredictability.

Still We Ride!

In Tandem Productions, 2005, 37 min., DVD

EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27 or CZK 500

This action-packed documentary is a glimpse into the shocking showdown between the monthly Critical Mass bike ride and New York City police in the months after the Republican National Convention in August 2004.

Postcards



Our line of Carbusters postcards expand our range of consumer products for the entire family! An assortment of ten postcards costs EUR 5 / US\$6 / £4.

"Freesources"

A growing selection of free texts available at <www.worldcarfree.net/resources/free.php>

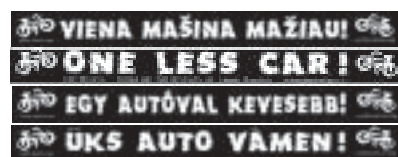
- *Car-Free Development* by Lloyd Wright
- *Energy and Equity* by Ivan Illich
- *Car-Free Housing in European Cities* by Jan Scheurer
- *The Automobile and Décroissance* by Denis Cheynet
- *Time Pollution* by John Whitelegg
- *Depaving the World* by Richard Register, and more!

Stickers

"One Less Car" Bike Stickers

Ten stickers: EUR 2, £1.40, US\$2.50, AU\$3.50, or CZK 50

Available in Catalan, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian/Swedish/Danish, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Turkish and Welsh. Sized for bike frames, water-resistant.



"Cancer Warning" Stickers

15 stickers: EUR 3, £2, US\$3.50, AU\$5, or CZK 90



Big hard-to-remove stickers for cars.

Available in French, German, English, Spanish and Czech.

Stop-Sign Improvement

One: EUR 0.85, £0.60, US\$1, AU\$1.30 or CZK 25

Ten: EUR 6.25, £4.25, US\$7.50, AU\$10 or CZK 180



Forty-six centimetres long. Bright red. These big glossy vinyl stickers are just the right size to go under the word "STOP" on stop signs.

T-Shirts

Looking for NEW T-Shirts!

We would like to offer new unique t-shirts. If you have a new design that asks for being worn all over the planet, please contact us!



"No Cars"

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250

White t-shirt with the "cars-forbidden" traffic sign on it. Unisex and woman style, in sizes M, L, XL.



"Carfree" and "Skull"

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250

Black, red, light blue ("Carfree" only); unisex: S, M, L, XL; woman style: S, M, L



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Shipping (surface rate outside Europe) is included in all prices. We accept **US, British, French and Australian** cheques made out to Carbusters. **Credit card payments** can be made on-line at <www.worldcarfree.net>. We also accept international **postal money orders** (in CZK or USD), and even cash in the currencies below (at your own risk, but seems OK).

Payments: Car Busters, Krátká 26, 100 00 Prague 10, Czech Rep.

Should you prefer to pay by **bank transfer**, please contact us.

Magazine Subscriptions

Country	4 Issues	8 Issues
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Eurozone	16 Euro	26 Euro
UK	10 Pounds	16 Pounds
US	16 Dollars	26 Dollars

Memberships

Advocate: EUR 30, £20, US\$40, AU\$50, CZK 600

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Saviour: EUR 100, £66, US\$130, AU\$166, CZK 2000

Membership benefits/premiums are described on the next page.

The prices above are calculated for "Over-Developed World" residents, in each of the currencies that we accept. Single copies cost EUR/US\$4 or equivalent. Eastern Europeans and "Global South" residents wanting magazine subscriptions or single copies can pay 1/3 the Western rate.

***Distribution Orders** (5 or more copies): EUR/US\$2.60 each or equivalent (you sell at EUR/US\$4 and keep the difference). In Eastern Europe and the "Global South," you buy at EUR/US\$1 and sell at EUR/US\$1.50. This is beginning to sound like the stock market...*

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Order from worldcarfree.net/resources.

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Towards Carfree Cities

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250

Sizes S, M in orange, red or forest green; size M, L in yellow



[front]

[back]



Photo: Ride-earth.org.uk

WORLD CARFREE NETWORK WORKS TO **BUILD AND MAINTAIN** THE GLOBAL **CARFREE MOVEMENT**. ITS PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS **ASSIST** PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD **TAKING ON** CAR CULTURE AND PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIFE. WE AIM TO **FACILITATE EXCHANGE** AND **COOPERATION** AMONG ACTIVISTS AND CAMPAIGNERS, REACH OUT TO THE PUBLIC, **INSPIRE** NEW ACTIVISTS AND **CHANGE THE WORLD**.

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includes a one-year magazine subscription, an assortment of bike stickers and one of these books: Ken Avidor's *Roadkill Bill*, Andy Singer's *CARTOONS*, or Martin Wagner's *The Little Driver*. (circle one)

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includes a one-year magazine subscription, a copy of *Carfree Cities* by JH Crawford, and one of these books: *CARTOONS*, *Roadkill Bill*, or *The Little Driver*. (circle one)

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announcements

Portland to Host Towards Carfree Cities VIII in 2008

The Steering Committee of the World Carfree Network has decided that Towards Carfree Cities VIII will take place in Portland, Oregon, USA.

Congratulations to Shift, the host organisation. You can contact the hosts at portland@worldcarfree.net. The conference will likely take place in mid-June. General conference information at www.worldcarfree.net/conference.

Register Now for Towards Carfree Cities VII in Istanbul

This year's conference theme "Building a Livable Future in a Changing Climate" emphasises the potential and urgency of addressing global climate change through the creation of carfree human habitats, while also hinting at the growing potential for change in the social and political climate.

The conference takes place from August 27-31. For registration and information see www.worldcarfree.net/conference.

Velo-City 2007

Velo-city is an international forum that convenes every two years to discuss strategies to promote bicycle transport. This year's conference takes place in Munich, Germany, June 12 - 15.

www.velo-city2007.com

Travel for a Cause

Travel for a Cause offers five international eco-tours led by local environmental and outdoor enthusiasts in Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. Every tour includes a built-in tax deduction to the Environmental Partnership endowment which supports citizens in protecting Mother Earth. E-mail

mkstjernholm@msn.com for dates and itineraries.

Belgian Highway Takeover

On Sunday May 6 thousands of people will cycle to Brussels from all over Belgium. The event is called BicyCity and is organised by the 'Fietsersbond' to create more attention from the government for cyclists. After long negotiations, the organising group got permission to use the highways around Brussels (A12 and E411) for the final kilometers. Join them! Info at www.bicycity.be.

Adventure Cycling

Adventure Cycling Association is a bicycle travel organisation in North America with more than 43,000 members. A nonprofit organisation,

its mission is to inspire people of all ages to travel by bicycle. It produces routes and maps for cycling in North America, organises more than 30 tours annually, and publishes bicycle travel information, including *Adventure Cyclist* magazine and *The Cyclists' Yellow Pages*.

In 2007, they offer a variety of tours and competitions, including the world's longest mountain bike route. The Great Divide Route stretches more than 2,500 miles of Rocky Mountain ridgeline from Canada to Mexico.

Competitors finish the annual Great Divide Race in a scant 20 days, but a self-supported tour starting June 16 and lasting 70 days is also offered.

For more, visit www.adventurecycling.org.

Local Renewables Freiburg 2007 (June 13-15, Germany)

This is a European conference within the framework of the German EU Presidency focusing on the interconnection between three key issues for local communities: climate protection, security of energy supply, local development and local resources. All three issues are clearly linked to sustainable energy.

Together we need to find ways to reduce energy consumption, use energy efficiency measures, switch to renewable energy sources, and consider how to support the European targets at a local level.

For event details see www.localrenewables2007.org or contact LR2007@iclei.org.



Sam Higgs. Streetsareforpeople.org



World Carfree Day

Every September 22, people from around the world get together in the streets, on sidewalks, intersections, and neighbourhood blocks to remind the world that we don't have to accept a car-dominated society as a given.

2007 should be no different.

But we do not want just one day of celebration and then a return to "normal" life. When people get out of their cars, they should stay out of their cars. It is up to us, it is up to our cities, and our governments to help create permanent change to benefit pedestrians, cyclists, and other people who do not drive cars.

Let World Carfree Day be a showcase for just how our cities might look like, feel like, and sound like without cars... 365 days a year.

As the climate heats up, World Carfree Day is the perfect time to take the heat off the planet, and put it on city planners and politicians to give priority to cycling, walking and public transport, instead of to the automobile.

www.worldcarfree.net/wcfd

Call for Submissions: Our Cities, Our Selves

Carbusters #31 looks at how urban form shapes our physical, mental, and spiritual health.

What is "urban form"? It's how our towns and cities are built. We're asking you to take a look at your surroundings. What do you see? How do the circumstances of your surroundings shape your daily habits? What changes would you like to see and how might these changes change you?

As usual, we are always looking for good stories, graphics, photos, and links encouraging the carfree lifestyle as well as reports from the front lines of carfree activism. We always welcome cool stickers, stencils and other agitprop for reproduction in the magazine and to offer in the resources section of our website.

See www.carbusters.org/submissions for complete guideline.

Call to Artists

Send your photos and artworks in to our 'Shell's Wild Lie' counter-exhibition: www.shelloiledwildlife.org.uk

www.artnotoil.org.uk

Protection against climate change.
Find out what can be done at climatesafe.co.uk



Friends of
the Earth

TOMORROW'S CLIMATE

Today's Challenge

