



# The Spoken Wheel

San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition • Number 1 • Spring 2002

## Who we are...



### Coalition triumphs

#### Old Creek Road, Cayucos

**Problem:** No "Share The Road" signs on Old Creek Road. The County roads department placed signs on roads last year but overlooked the popular cycling route along Old Creek Road.

**Solution:** Coalition member Robert Davis took daily counts of bicycle usage along the well-known route, tabulated the results and presented his findings to the county BAC and roads department. In February a sign was placed north of Whale Rock and south of Santa Rita Road. We tip our helmet to Red!

#### Broad at South Street intersection

**Problem:** This intersection has one of the highest volumes of vehicle traffic in SLO, yet there were no striped crosswalks. This intersection is a school route crossing and a popular route for bicyclists to cross State Hwy 227 (Broad St.).

**Solution:** In late November the coalition made a request to Caltrans' electrical operations engineer, Julie Gonzalez, to stripe and paint crosswalks at this dangerous intersection. Three months later, Chris Engelmann of Caltrans' traffic safety branch and their striping crew were responsible for getting the crosswalk markings placed.

### Coalition history/summary

In June 2001 local physician and triathlete, Jim Hannah, made an offer of up to \$5,000 to help fund a county-wide coalition (including all seven cities), with a paid executive director, to improve cyclist safety on roads, improve access, work with local governments to include bike lanes and bike paths in new and existing developments and to raise the awareness of motorists. This request was directed to Philip Novotny, local advocate and CFO of B.O.B. Trailers. Within hours Philip had distributed the offer via e-mail to fellow cycling activists, local bike companies and riders. Micki Kozuschek, general manager of Truvativ, USA, responded immediately. Micki felt that the aggression of some drivers towards cyclists and pedestrians is unreal—and that SLO active people need to help make a difference. He continued. "I am personally ready to step up with some money and some of my spare time." (*New Times*, "Can we create velotopia?" June 21-28, 2001)

What transpired during the course of last summer is now history. An initial meeting was set for Tuesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at Elaine Simer's Hostel Obispo. About 20 concerned cyclists and activists showed up to form a countywide bicycle coalition. A seven-member interim board of directors was organized and Jim Aaron, a Cambria resident, volunteered as the interim executive director. Board members met monthly, produced a mission statement and bylaws, arranged to file for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, and changed a few members. In November, Jim Aaron resigned as interim executive director, and was voted onto the board. The board

then appointed Oxo Slayer as executive director.

Philip Novotny recommended we contract Dave Snyder of the 10-year-old San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, to facilitate a coalition development workshop, based on strategic planning concepts, in January 2002. Dave explained some of the necessary steps in forming an effective bicycle advocacy group. He pointed out that an effective coalition must include a strategy for changing local government policy. Dave said, "A coalition has to do more than education and awareness."

Now we have a new mission statement, values, vision statement (see page 4), bylaws, a nine-member board of directors, a part-time paid executive director, a newsletter, a website, goals and objectives for 2002—and a growing membership base.

Please join us and support a cause that affects all of us. Our monthly board meetings are open to the public and you are invited to attend. We meet the first Thursday of every month from 12 noon to 1:30 P.M. in the SLO Regional Rideshare conference room, 1150 Osos Street, Suite 206, SLO. Help shape our communities with a common voice.



Robert Davis

## Happenings

### The "Happening's" happening

Do you sometimes sit at home on a Thursday evening, longing to ride your bike but lamenting that there is just nobody to ride with? Feel like getting out more? Then check out the "Bicycle Happening" on the first Thursday of each month.

At 9:30 P.M. a group of bicyclists of all ages and abilities meets in the Mission Plaza in downtown San Luis Obispo, rain or shine, then proceeds on a short (two-ish laps around downtown) bike ride that usually ends up at a final destination spot for libations and conversation.

The mood is festive, not competitive, and it is a great way to get out and meet other bicyclists in the county in an informal



setting. The event's organizer says that the bicycle happening is *not* a protest; it is just a group of people riding bikes, showing passers-by how much fun pedal-power can be. Horns, bells, and costumes are encouraged; bike lights and following traffic rules are required.

Unlike a critical mass, which is often criticized for being divisive and disruptive, the happening attempts to bring cyclists together with the community to encourage further bicycle use. People are invited to join in and ride along; the point is not what kind of bike you ride, rather that you are out riding. All are encouraged to attend the happening. About 100-150 cyclists usually attend, with more expected during the warmer months. Will you be one of them?

Celebrate bike culture in your community. Organize a bike happening of your own!

## From the saddle...

So, who is this Oxo Slayer dude? The first thing you should know about me is that I love to ride! A SLO transplant of nine years—I was drawn to the people, climate, recreational opportunities and university here on the Central Coast while passing through in 1992. I have been riding a bike since 1976, and completed my first mountain bike race in 1987 (the Massanutten Mountain Bike HooHa). I have always loved cycling. Growing up in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia formed my love for riding on country dirt roads and in the state's national forests. Later, after nine years of commercial salmon fishing in Alaska and wintering on the Central Coast, I entered Cal Poly's city and regional planning undergraduate program in the fall of 2000. I realized that a career in building bikes or building roads made more of an impact on community character with sound urban transport planning.

I am married to my brilliant and beautiful

wife, Zack, and have a two-year-old son named Henry. We are a cycling family with five bikes and a Burley kid's trailer in the garage (you may see us shuttling Henry, by bike, to the ASI Children's Center in the mornings and afternoons). I also coordinate the only countywide bike safety program for SLO Regional Rideshare. My boss and mentor, John Donovan, has been leading the charge for bicycle promotion and safety for years. Philip Novotny catalyzed my decision to take the job as executive director of SLOCBC, and continues to provide insight daily. I took this position to realize my dreams to motivate people towards a sustainable future and to bring all of you together with a common voice. "Velorution" is under way in SLO County! Join us.



## State of the state

### New area 5 Caltrans director

Gregg Albright was recently appointed director of Caltrans District 5 (comprising San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Monterey San Benito and Santa Barbara counties).

A graduate of Cal Poly and a registered landscape architect, Albright has more than 20 years of state transportation experience on the Central Coast in the areas of project planning, design and management. He formerly served as the deputy district director of planning and local assistance for District 5.

Albright said the quality of Central Coast residents' lives are directly tied to mobility.

"I also know that there is an expectation that transportation solutions will respect community values, promote environmental stewardship and contribute to a sustainable economy," he said. "I am committed to working... with

communities to find those relevant solutions."

Albright is leading our district and the state in implementation of Caltrans director Jeff Morales' new policy titled "Context-sensitive solutions." Caltrans aims to change corporate culture by using "inclusive approaches that integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historic, and environmental values with transportation safety, maintenance, and performance goals." This policy will directly affect cyclists and pedestrians by providing opportunities "...for enhanced non-motorized travel and visual quality."

To survive the new millennium of transport planning, Caltrans has realized they need to start thinking "outside the box" and build facilities that accommodate all modes of travel using environmentally and aesthetically responsible methods.

## County spin

The coalition recently rallied support for the annual SLOCOG "Unmet Transportation Needs" hearing in February. Over 80 community members signed petitions or gave public testimony targeting four priority unmet bicycle transportation needs in the county established by the coalition: (1) a bike path connecting Morro Bay to Cayucos; (2) a pedestrian/bike bridge over Old Creek connecting Studio Drive with Pacific Avenue; (3) a bike path connecting Atascadero and Templeton; and (4) a bike path connecting Cuesta Springs Road with the northbound shoulder of Hwy 101 on the north side of Cuesta Grade. SLOCOG has responded to all those unmet needs requests. Stay tuned.

One example of Caltrans' ability to accommodate bicyclists alongside a state of the art highway facility will be realized in summer 2003.

As part of the Cuesta Grade Hwy 101 widening project, and with relentless pressure from SLOCOG, a bicycle tunnel (box culvert) will provide northbound cyclists with uninterrupted access to Old Stagecoach Road. A paved bike path will lead to the tunnel and a mid-tunnel skylight will lead cyclists to the exit where another paved bike path will connect with Old Stagecoach. Caltrans has completed a grade-separated bike path at the summit connecting Old Stagecoach to Cuesta Springs Road.

While these facilities do accommodate cyclists traversing one of our county's topographical landmarks, we still have an extremely unsafe connection from Cuesta Springs Road back to the northbound shoulder. This gap is one of our priority projects and

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The **Spoken Wheel** is published by the San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition, working to transform San Luis Obispo County into a safer and more livable community by promoting cycling and walking for everyday transportation and recreation. Executive Director, Oxo Slayer Board of Directors

### City/county

#### San Luis Obispo City Bicycle Advisory Committee

Meets 3rd Thursday of March, June, September and November at City Hall, 7-9:00p.m.

Agendas available about 10 days beforehand; public welcome to attend. See [www.slocity.org/publicworks/bac.asp](http://www.slocity.org/publicworks/bac.asp), or call Terry Sanville, 781-7178.

#### San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Advisory Committee

Meets quarterly, 2nd Tuesday at 7:00P.M. Contact: Dave Flynn, 781-4463.

#### Morro Bay

##### Citizens Bike Committee

Meets monthly 1st Wednesday, Morro Bay Community Center, 5P.M.-6P.M. Phone: 772-0874 for information.

##### Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

Recommends local transportation projects and funding to SLOCOG. Open to the public. Pizza served. Phone: SLOCOG staff at 781-4219.

##### San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)

Usually meets the 1st Wednesday of each month in County Board of Supervisors chambers at 8:30A.M.

##### California Association of Bicycling Organizations (CABO)

CABO meets four times a year. Meetings alternate between northern and southern California. For more information, see web site: <http://www.cabobike.org>.

##### Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (CCMB)

Contact: Dave Arndt, 438-4631; See calendar for trail days.



**Cayucos Elementary Group Ride.** Photo courtesy of SLO Rideshare.

efforts are underway to provide an additional, uninterrupted connection at the north end of the grade. For Cuesta Grade bike detour information during construction, see [www.cuestagrade.com](http://www.cuestagrade.com) or contact the coalition.

### Coalition thanks to...

Supervisor Shirley Bianchi for her efforts to complete the East-West/Santa Rosa pedestrian/bike path in Cambria. Shirley called a special meeting last November and rallied CalTrans, State Parks Dept, SLO County Parks Dept, SLO County budget office, SLO County Engineering Dept, and concerned members of the community to save the project. Some of the grant monies were in jeopardy; allocated funds were about to be diverted to other projects (roads). In an awesome display of government in action, Shirley broke the bureaucratic logjam of every other department waiting for paperwork from every other department and got the program back on track.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

—Jim Aaron

### Building a bridge: The Railroad Safety Trail

While the Jennifer Street Bridge may be a familiar landmark for most SLO residents, few SLO county cyclists are

probably aware that this is the entrance to a Class I bicycle and pedestrian path, the Railroad Safety Trail. Beginning at the Amtrak Station near downtown SLO, the large bridge allows bicyclists and walkers to safely cross the train tracks and enter the bike path, which currently extends from the Jennifer Street Bridge to Orcutt Road, near Laurel Lane.

I have been bicycling in SLO for many years and just recently discovered the RR Safety Trail. It is a flat, sheltered, easy way to traverse

town. There are many entrance and exit points along the way, one of which is conveniently located by Sinsheimer Park and the city pool. The best part of the trail is that there are *no cars!* Riding is stress-free and scenic, and with the continued help of the Bicycle Coalition, the Railroad Safety Trail is planned to stretch all the way to Cal Poly in the future. What you can do is get out and ride the trail. If car-free bicycling is something you enjoy, and if you would like to see the trail extend, then get involved with the coalition to help with continued efforts to speed up the completion of this convenient and well-used bicycle and pedestrian route.

### Ideas from the Fundraising committee

We are actively seeking volunteers and interested individuals to help organize, staff and produce several events. Please contact Jim Aaron for more info. You can reach Jim at 543-4812, ext. 715 from 9-5 M-F, cell 748-3800, or by e-mail at [borntoplay43@hotmail.com](mailto:borntoplay43@hotmail.com). Check out our list of pro-

posed events below and on our web site. We encourage everyone to get involved, make new friends, have some fun, and do some good work for the coalition, and our community.

**Membership mixer:** target date June/July. A casual get-together, possibly a picnic, or could coincide with Thursday night Farmer's Market/Bike Happening? The goal is to unite current coalition members and attract new members while having a good time.

**Bike-in:** target date Sept/Oct. current plan is to rent the Sunset Drive In and have a Bike-in night at the movies.

**Bike Rodeos and education:** target dates May/Aug/Oct. Support SLO Regional Rideshare's Bike Safety Program.

Rideshare presents Bike Safety info, conducts mini bike rodeos, and organizes group rides at participating elementary schools throughout the county.

**Member appreciation party:** target date Nov/Dec/Jan. This will be our gala event to bring our family of cyclists, and community members together. This one will be an annual event, and also one of the biggest fundraisers for the organization, based on the success of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, according to Dave Snyder.



Jennifer Street bridge entrance to the Railroad Safety Trail.

## Calendar & hot lines

### Calendar: Meetings/events

#### April

20 (Sat): CCMB trail day. 9:00 A.M. at Montaña de Oro ranch house.

#### May

14 (Tue): SLO County BAC. 7 p.m., Veterans' Memorial Building, SLO.  
13-17: Bike to Work week, SLO County.  
18: Bike Fest, Mission Plaza, SLO (10-2).

19 (Sun): CCMB. Chris King Trail Daze. Time/location TBA.  
25 (Sat): CABO. SLO County Fair Grounds (during GWBR), Paso Robles.

#### June

2 (Sun): CCMB. National Trails Day. 8:00 A.M. Cerro Alto campground.  
21 (Thu): SLO BAC. 7 p.m., City hall council meeting room. pedestrian thoroughfare.

### Hot lines

Bicycling hazards on county roads: 781-5252  
City of San Luis Obispo bicycling hazards: 781-7190.  
Law enforcement on county roads: CHP, South county and coastal areas, 593-3300; North county 434-1822.

# Let your voice be heard. Join the SLO County Bicycle Coalition!

## Membership dues

Student/Low income \$12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular individual \$25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular family \$35 \_\_\_\_\_  
Business \$50 \_\_\_\_\_  
Founding lifetime member \$125\* \_\_\_\_\_  
Life (Individual) \$150 \_\_\_\_\_  
Life (Household) \$200 \_\_\_\_\_  
Benefactor \$500 and over \_\_\_\_\_  
Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- New member     Renewal  
 Extra donation     Address change

\*Good until first 200 members or Labor Day 9/2/02

I would like to volunteer...

- 3 hours/mo.     4 hours/mo.  
 Help staff     Help with newsletter  
 New member     Help with events  
 Other

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Business (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street or P.O. Box address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone E-mail address

Please write your checks payable to: SLOCBC and send to: SLOCBC • P.O. Box 14860 • San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-4860. All donations are (501)(c)(3) tax-deductible.

What for you is the single most important bicycling issue in SLO County?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Our mission, values & vision

### **Mission...**

to transform San Luis Obispo into a safer and more livable community by promoting cycling and walking for everyday transportation and recreation

### **Values...**

- public access to open spaces
- sustainable land use planning and urban development

- a healthy population and environment
- economic vitality
- an efficient transportation system that provides equal mobility for all

### **Vision...**

See [www.slobikelane.com](http://www.slobikelane.com)

San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition  
PO Box 14860  
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[www.slobikelane.com](http://www.slobikelane.com)