

EASY RIDER



A Newsletter of the Transportation Alternatives Program

Vol. 1, No. 2, June 1991

Why Use Alternative Transportation?

What is to be gained by driving less to work? The following facts and figures indicate that there are economic and health reasons for using alternative transportation. The information is contained in the articles "The Real Cost of Energy," by H.M. Hubbard, *Scientific American*, April 1991, and "Driving Beyond the Limit," by Nancy Shute, *Amicus Journal*, Spring 1991. Figures below pertain to the U.S.

Motor vehicles, according to EPA estimates, generate 67 percent of all carbon monoxide, 41 percent of oxides of nitrogen, 33 percent of hydrocarbons, and 20 percent of particulates. The American Lung Association puts health care costs due to air pollution at roughly \$90 billion a year.

Two-thirds of rush hour commuters on urban interstates are inconvenienced by delays. Roughly \$10 to \$30 billion dollars are lost, due to lost work time.

Transportation consumes roughly 60 percent of the oil used in the United States. Our motor vehicles generate 25 percent of the U.S. carbon dioxide emissions.

National Center for
Atmospheric Research

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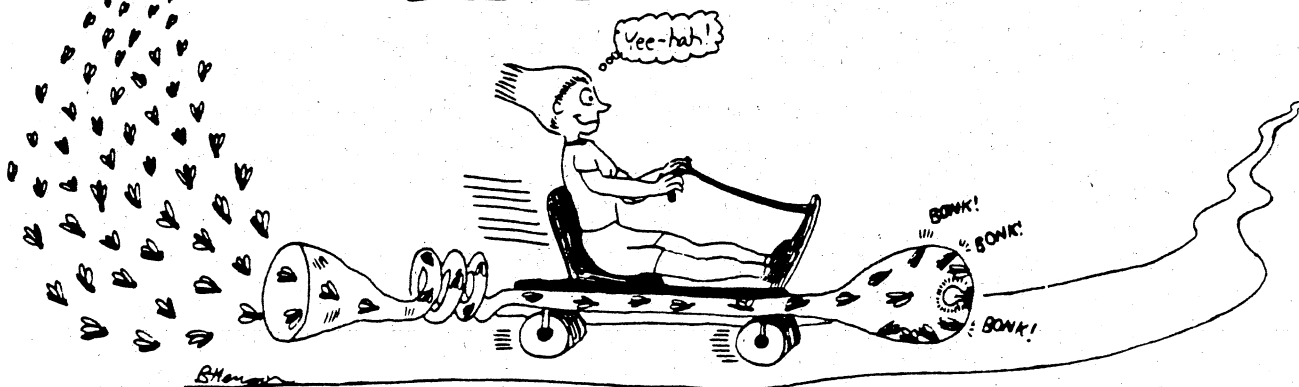
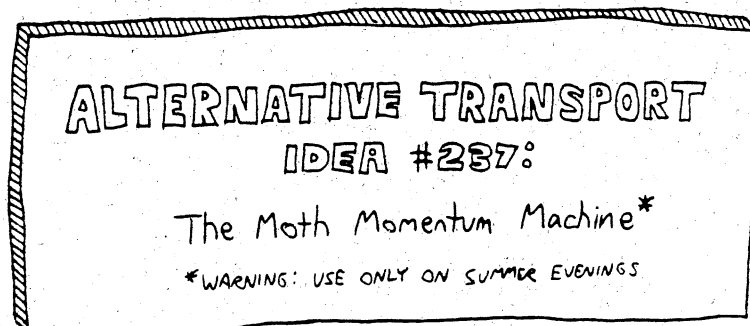
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The Department of Defense spent tens of billions of dollars in 1989 to safeguard Persian Gulf oil supplies. The economic cost of the Persian Gulf War is on the order of \$30 billion dollars. Loss of human life due to the Gulf War is between 100,000 and 200,000.

The federal government allocates roughly \$50 billion per year to energy producers in the form of tax credits and research funding. Half of this amount goes to fossil fuel production, \$19 billion to nuclear power production, and \$5 billion supports renewable energy sources.

Alternative transportation, such as bicycling and walking, can lead to better personal health, and less traffic congestion on our streets. Use of clean mass transit can reduce the environmental impacts of vehicle emissions. With less demands upon a limited and foreign source of fossil fuel, one hopes that a partial redirection of expenditures by our federal government can be applied to a host of domestic needs such as education, research and development, mass transit, and other programs.

Steve Massie





• **Bike Rack Update:** A bicycle rack has been moved from near the cooling tower to the front of the Mesa Lab, to help relieve congestion at the front racks. At the Foothills Laboratory, TAP is working with George Lamb to improve on the outdoor bicycle racks. A new experimental design will soon appear between Buildings 2 and 3. If successful, this new design may be used at the Fleischmann Building (which is currently without a bicycle rack).

• **TAP II:** A proposal for the next year of TAP is being prepared. It will be presented to the Director's Committee at the July meeting. If you have suggestions, now's the time to forward them to Chris Ennis (ML, ext. 1469).

• **RTD System Maps/Schedules:** To get an overview of the entire metro-area's route system in RTD, take a look at the maps which are now posted at the Mesa Laboratory (front desk), Foothills Laboratory (Building 3, west entrance) and Jeffco. Schedules for most Boulder and regional routes are also available at the ML and FL3. If you work at another NCAR site, you can call to request a schedule from Sharon Hsi (ML receptionist, ext. 1140).



• **Boulder Bike Week Festivities:** Whether you're a first time cycle-commuter or a person who rides every day, you're sure to enjoy Boulder's Bike to Work Day. Slated for Wednesday, 24 July, the event has something for everyone. Pedal your way to a free continental breakfast on your way to work.

Sign up to be counted as an NCAR cyclist for the competition among local businesses for greatest number of people cycling to work. Win (maybe) a prize! EAC will once again be awarding a prize to the person who does the longest commute and to five lucky cyclists whose names are drawn in a raffle.

Frustrated by THE HILL? This year you can ride to the SW corner of Table Mesa and Broadway and take the shuttle up to the Mesa Lab--this will count as an official Bike Day commute.

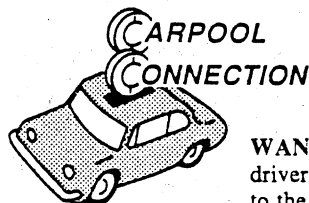


• **Bus Passes for New Employees/Visitors:** To get an RTD bus pass, take a 1-inch by 1-inch black and white photo of yourself to the Mesa Lab bank window (by the cafeteria) during the hours of 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday through Friday. There, you'll sign the pass (that's why you **MUST** show up in person).

You should also know your UCAR/NCAR employee or visitor number (obtain from your paycheck stub or from Human Resources). Your pass will be sent to you in about a week. Photos can be made for \$1 at K-Mart or the LA Diner in Boulder, or you can use one you already have if it's the correct size. If you have questions regarding the bus pass, call Janice Saffell at ext. 1598.

Remember that RTD bus passes must be turned in to the division administrator upon an employee's termination or a visitor's departure from NCAR/UCAR.

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WANTED: Rider or driver to share commute to the Mesa Lab from near the intersection of the

Longmont Diagonal (Colorado 119) and Niwot Road; 2-3 days per week; hours flexible between about 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Contact Rene Munoz at ext. 1173.

WANTED:

Riders/drivers seeking to make carpool connections. Send information to Chris Ennis (ML, ext. 1469) and we'll run it in a Carpool Connection column in *Staff Notes*. Yet another way you could choose to "TAP Into It"--sign up now to beat the rush! Who knows? You may discover a new friend.

Questions????????????????????

Please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Transportation Alternatives Group if you have questions about TAP:

Chris Ennis, co-chair	ML	x1469
Dean Lindstrom, co-chair	ML	x1141
Joanne Dunnebecke	FW	x8431
Rachel Jones	FB	x1650
Patty Loudin	ML	x1549
Steve Massie	ML	x1404
Barbara McDonald	ML	x1601
Kathy Morgan	FL	x8954
Janice Saffell	ML	x1598

Featured TAPpers



When Art Richmond came to HAO, he decided to continue bicycling to work as he had done while at NOAA. "It allows us to be a one-car family," he says. However, the ride up the mesa road was a bit different. "It took about six months for me to be able to get up the hill without stopping to rest," says Art.

Eight years later, Art rides the same hill nearly every day, in all seasons.

Art has encouraging words for would-be bicycle commuters. They shouldn't worry if they have trouble getting up the mesa road. "It's hard for everyone at first," he says. In addition, Art has found that drivers are more aware of bicyclists and therefore more courteous than they were when he first came to Boulder. However, he's careful to add that it's still important to "ride defensively."

Art likes best the feeling of fitness he gets as a result of his daily ride. "This is my only form of exercise," he says. When Art recently spent a year in France, he found he missed his bicycling--besides, he was ribbed by his wife for getting flabby!

Since the Richmonds have only the one car, in bad weather Art typically rides the bus and the NCAR shuttle. He's found that the new shuttle schedule greatly reduces the time he spends waiting. When asked how his wife gets around on the rare occasions when he must have the car, Art smiles and replies, "She rides her bike!"



John Veresh of Traffic Services began riding the bus to work three and half years ago. John chuckles, "It fit my lifestyle. I was sharing a car with my 16-year-old daughter..."

Although the ride from John's home in Layayette takes about 30 minutes longer than it would take to drive, there are no transfers, which has its advantages. "I enjoy the leisure time," John says, "I get to read."

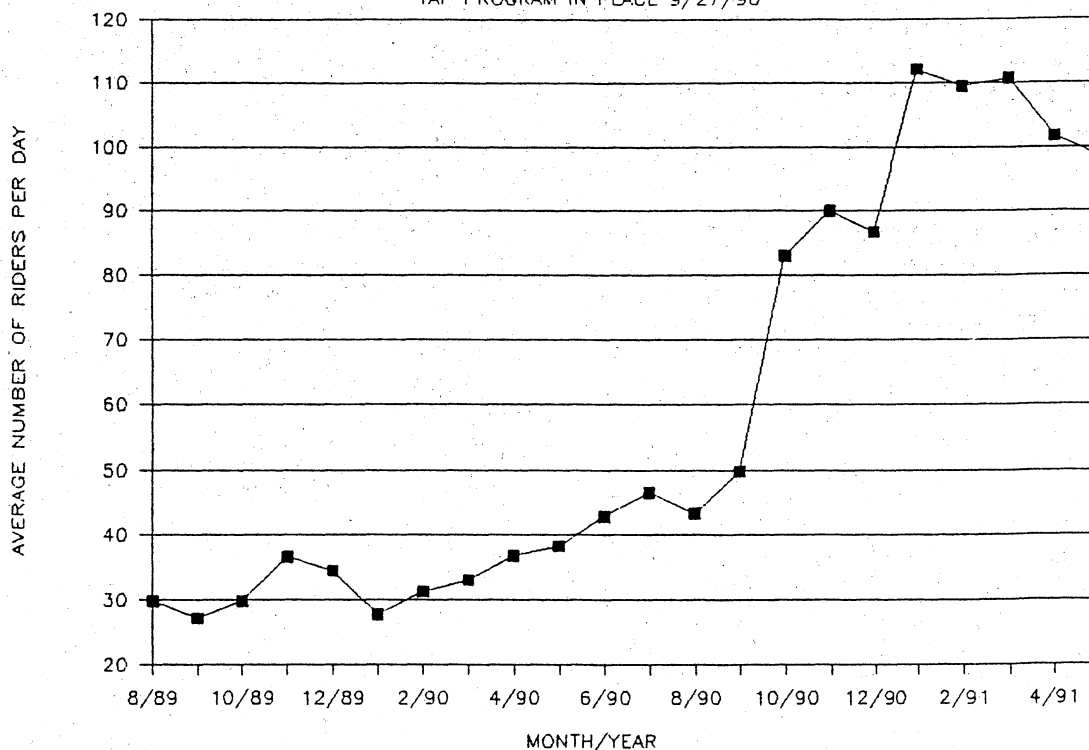
John needs to be at work at 7:00 a.m., before the first NCAR shuttle run down the hill (he sometimes drives it). To get to the top of the mesa, he simply displays his NCAR card. Even at that early hour, he has no trouble getting a ride. In fact, when John asked one driver what she did for NCAR, she replied, "Oh, I don't work here." Although her home is at the bottom of the hill, she had driven John up--just to be neighborly!

John rides the bus to work every day, year-round. He says the new shuttle schedule saves time, and estimates that his bus pass will save him \$250 this year. Although John has gained a lot from the Transportation Alternatives Program, he was already a satisfied RTD customer. He adds, "I'd ride the bus anyway."

Patty Loudin

NCAR Shuttle Riders

TAP PROGRAM IN PLACE 9/27/90



Traveling on Two Wheels: Tips for the Cyclo-Commuter

I ride my bicycle to work most of the time. Ice, the flu, and occasional fits of laziness force me into a car periodically, but cycling is my preferred means of travel. I do it for a lot of reasons: it's an easy way to build exercise into my life; it feels good to experience the world without a ton or two of metal between me and the birds; and it's something I can do as an individual to live my environmental ethics.

In trying to write a column on cycle-commuting tips, I realized that almost everything I have to say is decidedly personal. With the exception of a few general "rules," everything is relative. I can't imagine riding without toeclips and special bike shorts, while you might feel dangerous and/or stupid with them. The best way to figure out what works for you is to experiment; try different things and talk to other people who ride to work. Keep after it and you'll figure it out.

Okay, here are the rules:

1. Always wear a helmet. I've read endless statistics on the survivability of accidents with and without a helmet, but nothing moved me as much as the statement made in a recent *Bikecentennial* magazine article by a nurse who deals with brain-injured patients. She said quite simply that she would rather be a paraplegic than live with a brain injury.

2. Obey the laws of the road. The rules that apply to cars also apply to you: stop at red lights and stop signs; be in the left lane if you are turning left; learn and use hand signals when you turn; always yield to pedestrians--you're moving a lot faster than they are.

3. Ride predictably. If you can't ride a straight line, practice until you can. Either use a rearview mirror or be able to turn and look behind you without veering into traffic. Do not wear headphones--you need all of your senses in working order to ride safely.

4. Ride defensively. Ordinary people can turn into maniacs when they're behind the wheel of a car. Be prepared for the worst because it will happen every day. Drivers will go through red lights; they will turn right in front of you; they will fail to yield the right of way in places they're

legally supposed to yield. No matter how mad you get, do not get into a fight with a car and its driver; you cannot win. Instead get the license plate number and report the person to the police as soon as you reach a phone. You have a right to ride your bicycle on the street; anyone who compromises your safety should be reported immediately.

5. Find a route that's as safe and enjoyable as possible. It's often the case that the most direct route is choked with cars during rush hour so you'll want to experiment with alternate routes. Consult the Boulder Bicycling Map; call the city's Bike Coordinator, Sharon Harvey, at 441-3216; and/or talk to other cyclists. Riding an extra few miles may be well worth the time if it gives you an enjoyable commute.

Those are the general rules. Here are some things I do that might work for you:

- Realize that it's going to take longer to get to work in the morning and plan accordingly. I carry my work clothes in panniers mounted on a rear rack on my bicycle and then change when I get to work. Panniers or bags that mount on top of a rack are nice (especially in the summer), but you can easily use a backpack instead. If you don't have to dress up at work or if you have a short commute, you might try riding to work in your work clothes. You'll know by the time you get there if this works for you.

- If you have locker space at work, think about what you can keep in your locker rather than carry back and forth every day. It might be dress shoes, a suit jacket, towel, and shower stuff, etc. The less you carry each day, the more fun you'll have.

- Things to carry with you: lock, pump, patch kit and tire irons, and/or spare tube, lights if you're going to ride at night (this is required by law).

- Things that I can't imagine not having: padded bike shorts, padded gloves, sunglasses. (The list is considerably longer for winter riding!)

- Try to be flexible. If you can only ride one day a week, be pleased with yourself for achieving a 20% reduction in miles you drive to work. If cycle-commuting just isn't possible for you and you'd still like to reduce your auto-dependence, try cycling at lunch instead of driving or do some weekend trips by bicycle instead of by car.

- Have fun.

Joanne Dunnebecke

Did You Know?

* Fossil fuels account for 85% of the 80 quadrillion BTU's consumed yearly in the U.S.

* The price of a gallon of gas in the U.S. doesn't begin to cover the many "hidden" costs of its use (see Steve Massie's article in this issue). Many other countries have internalized these costs by adding fuel taxes to the pump price. In France, the price of a gallon of gas is \$3; in Italy, about \$4. Higher fuel taxes in those countries account for most of the difference between those prices and the U.S. price of \$1.50. The present U.S. federal gasoline tax is 14 cents per gallon.

* Ten years ago, the Department of Transportation spent twice as much on highways as it did on mass transit. Today, that ratio is 5 to 1.

* The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that a 3% increase in mass transit spending would double ridership in 10 years, and reduce car use by 15%.

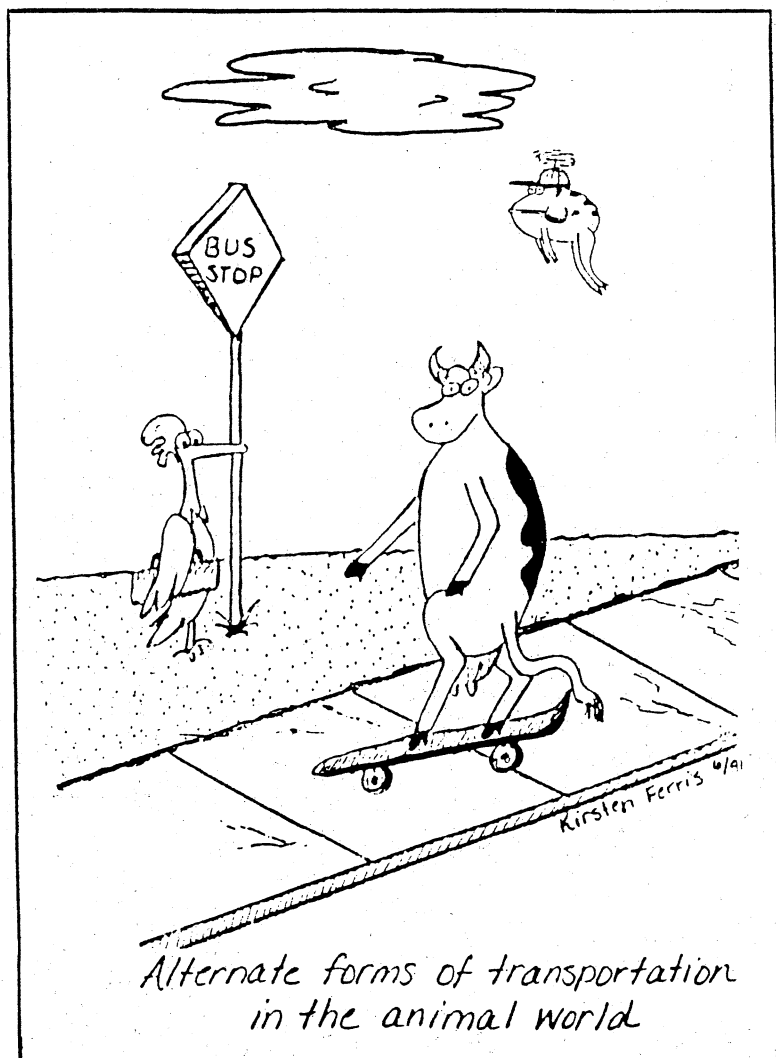
* Existing laws permit states to spend \$4.5 million a year in federal highway funds on bicycle projects; only 18 states have ever done so.

* In California, electric vehicles (EVs) are being proposed as a strategy for bringing the LA basin into compliance with federal clean air standards. For every 100,000 miles driven, the pollution associated with EVs is 5 lbs. of reactive organic gases, 9 lbs. of carbon monoxide, and 61 lbs. of nitrogen oxides. For gasoline-powered cars, those numbers are 2623, 2574, and 172. General Motors may have an electric vehicle--"Impact"--on the market in 1992. It will have a range of 100 miles between charges. Chrysler and Ford are developing EVs. Development of the batteries is the biggest obstacle faced by EV manufacturers.

Chris Ennis

Thanks!

Thanks to Kirsten Ferris and Bob Henson for providing the cartoons for this issue.



Chris Ennis

Easy Rider is published approximately twice a year by the Transportation Alternatives Group.

Editor: Chris Ennis
Production Assistant: Rachel Jones
Writers: TAG Members



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