

BICYCLE! by Sam Tracy

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I am not a vehement cyclist. I have a trendy, candy-red cruiser and enjoy tooling around my neighborhood. But I have to say that after encountering Mr. Sam Tracy, something has turned inside me, a gear has shifted, perhaps? I am starting to see life beyond gasoline and speedy trips across town in my Subaru. *Bicycle!* beckons me to do more. More for my community, my culture, my planet. My bicycle.

—Susan Hill Newton, editor of *Bicycle!*

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

There is nothing sacrosanct about bike repair. Its pursuit only requires the will to learn.

At their finest hours, bikes exist on a level above mere machines, and there's no reason why the joy should end once the ride is over. *Bicycle!*, written by a die-hard working bicycle mechanic and former courier, offers up everything you need to know to feed and care for your ride, with a bit of bikes-versus-cars insight on the side.

This book cuts through the obtuse techno-speak like a fixed gear through the gridlock, conveying maintenance clarity with humor and radicalism, all the while categorically denying mechanist's supposed dreariness. *Bicycle!* encourages any and all to learn the real thrills about autonomy in transportation, not because we have to, but because we want to.



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BICYCLE!: Press Kit cont'd

With detailed descriptions of all the most useful maintenance tasks and repair scenarios, clearly illustrated, this guide serves the need for a serious rider's manual. Professional bicycle workers—messengers, mechanics, pedi-cab drivers—as well as bicycle commuters have been waiting for this very book.

SOME OF THE TOPICS COVERED:

- Essential Tools
- Bike Components
(Maintaining, Adjusting, Repairing)
- On-the-Road Repairs
- Build Your Own
(Scavenging)
- Locks / Thief Deterrents
- Rust, the Elemental Bike Nemesis
- And much, much more ...

A FEW BICYCLE ORGANIZATIONS

International Federation of Bike Messenger Associations, <http://www.messengers.org>

The Hard Times Bike Club (a. k. a. Black Label Bike Club)

Chunk 666, <http://chunk666pdx.easyjournal.com/>

Cyclecide, <http://www.cyclecide.com/>

Bikes Belong, <http://bikesbelong.org/site/intro.cfm>

Thunderhead Alliance, <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/index.asp>

League of American Bicyclists, <http://www.bikeleague.org/index.cfm>

Author Sam Tracy

AUTHOR BIO

Sam Tracy writes about bikes from a practiced Midwestern perspective, drawing upon his experiences as a bike mechanic, messenger, and shop manager.

In the early nineties, Sam began producing the zine *Biker Pride*, after being fired from the college newspaper for violating its objectivity rules. This project was later broadened just enough to become the urban cycling-focused *The Multiplier* zine. During this period, he also wrote articles for publications such as *Maximum Rocknroll* and *Punk Planet*. His first bicycle repair manual, *How to Rock and Roll*, was published by Black Kettle Graphics of San Francisco in 2001.

Having biked through the last fifteen snowy winters in Milwaukee and Minneapolis, Sam is currently residing in Boston, where he volunteers as a mechanic for the indispensable non-profit Bikes Not Bombs. Sam lives with his fiancée Kerri, herself a professional idealist, and their wonderful cat Kozmo.

SAM TRACY'S MANIFESTATIONS OF A BICYCLE MANIFESTO

Bicycle! was originally inspired by various shortcomings in my first book, which I began to notice shortly after it appeared in print. I'd only worked as a mechanic for a couple of years before starting to write *How to Rock and Roll*, so maybe this was inevitable. The skills involved in bike repair really are broadly accessible, but the craft is also filled out with a vast collection of tiny rules and obscure exceptions, the sum of which can only be glimpsed at the outset.

I also wanted to produce a bike repair manual that told things as they actually were. Bicycle component manufacturers are always adamant about their received wisdom, yet they sometimes flatly contradict each other's findings, so this really seemed like the only way to go. The industry itself has traditionally favored bland, lowest-common-denominator sorts of books, but I fail to see how this approach could draw people in. Things are often more personal—shit breaks down; startling realizations are achieved; good might even battle evil. And while some trends and technologies within cycling clearly deserve our support, others could certainly be scrutinized far more carefully, and given a little imagination this distinction could be better reflected in the options we find before us.

Of course it's not quite so simple; our entire bicycle industry exists as a function of the monumental economic distortions descending from the petroleum economy, and to put it in a nutshell it is not at all positioned to move beyond that state. Bicycle design and construction should consider sustainability and utility more than they've tended to—and it'd be foolish to guess that this would stomp all over aesthetic considerations—and the most should be made of what we have already. *Bicycle!* is about making it happen now.

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