



COGNITION

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You're in Our World Now

BY HOWARD WILLIAMS

Disclaimer: This article is the opinion of the author and is not necessarily the official opinion of the SFBMA.

On September 11 everything changed for all Americans. As SF Chronicle columnist Chris Matthews observed, up until last month America was a country of our own making. Even our catastrophes such as Vietnam and the Civil War were of our own making. "This was the first time something was done to us," he pointed out. His observation is like many that have been made privately and publicly since the mass murders. These statements reflect the anxiety of a new and sudden insecurity felt by many Americans.

There is something I must tell those Americans. You're in my world now.

Over three weeks have passed since the attacks on New York, the Pentagon and Flight 93. Many people say these attacks have united us as never before. I believe that's true. But not just for the reasons we've been told.

Before September 11 there were two Americas. One was the America that is well known: wealthy and comfortable . . . and secure. The America that recorded the longest running economic expansion of its history while increasing the gap between the poor and the rich. An America that believes the Corporatist way of life has been approved by History.

That comfortable America is now insecure. In the other America there is no such thing as security. The awareness that I may be killed that day sits quietly in the back of my mind yet subtly pervades my thoughts.

I am a messenger. But much of what I say applies to all of us in the other America. My insecurity is dramatically revealed to me but it is just as real -- and usually more so -- for too many other citizens of this land. In recent days Americans of Arab or Afghan descent have faced violence. Sikhs, Latinos and most ironic -- Native Americans -- face the same violent bigotry because racists are too ignorant and lazy to distinguish among brown skinned people. And for too many African Americans things are still as they were over 40 years ago when Norman Mailer wrote that "no Negro" can walk on the street without being aware that Death can claim him. In factories many Americans must work at dangerous and dirty jobs in an atmosphere of lax safety regulations. Gay Americans are assaulted every day in unprovoked attacks in all parts of America even here in San Francisco. Girls and women of all ages are raped.

No doubt many of these Americans remember that they

have never had the security that the comfortable Americans now miss. Their stories must be heard by those who are -- or were -- comfortable.

But today I will speak about only a few of us -- the messengers. Before you dismiss us as being too few remember that we exercise influence far beyond our numbers. After all it only takes one of us to anger a whole block or more of frustrated drivers even when we move safely and legally. Before you dismiss us as being too immature know that we consider you to be the spoiled brats causing our country's transportation problems. And before you dismiss us as being too arrogant I ask you to look at yourselves.

Benjamin Franklin stated that those who are willing to sacrifice freedom for security deserve neither. Apparently that admonishment doesn't apply to the comfortable America. The comfortable America wants security AND freedom . . . along with wealth. And for too long the comfortable have gotten these things without paying the bill.

The bill is overdue.

In recent days Americans are asking themselves why a group of fanatics on the other side of the world hate us. To answer that question we've finally

begun to examine our foreign policies. While we're at it we'd better look at our policies here at home. These policies will not explain why somebody over there hates us but they will explain something more important: why we're divided over here and therefore that much more vulnerable to attack by those that hate us.

Each day bicycle messengers must "share" the road with thousands of vehicles that crowd our space, foul our air and threaten our lives. And that's at the very least. The terrorism that drivers inflict on the cycling minority certainly should not be compared to the tragedies of September 11. But we must face the fact that those two terrorisms are related and have made all Americans vulnerable to our enemies. The terrorism caused by excess and extreme driving ironically fuels the terrorism of Ben Laden and his ilk. Ever wonder where Ben Laden's wealth comes from? Do the common sense. Ben Laden's inheritance (estimated at 300 million dollars) comes from his father's construction contracts in the Saudi OIL fields. Recent news stories report that one to two million dollars *each month* are sent to Ben Laden from his donors in Saudi Arabia alone. You can probably figure



SFBMA MINUTES



CMWC & PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DAMON VOTOUR, SFBMA PRESIDENT

July: Vienna, Austria, home of Beethoven, Mozart, Strauss, Schubert and Hitler; this city bleeds culture from the architecture to the art and music. The Viennese Messengers put on a great pre-CMWC event/alley cat. The race was won by Dominic of London. Messengers from a dozen countries descended upon Vienna days before the race, caroused, drank and ogled at the sights. There was a great Salvador Dali exhibition going on at the time and a Mozart concert running at one of the places he actually performed at with the musicians wearing clothes from that actual time period. I went to the performance with Dean, a courier from Australia. We sat in the balcony in awe. We felt like Statler and Waldorf from the Muppets (the old guys in the balcony). It was rather surrealistic to say the least. Chalkhead, John -- a messenger from Ireland -- and I stayed with a Messenger who is also a doctor. It's pretty amazing, he works part time at both professions. If he isn't setting the stitches, he's getting them !! His neighbor was a crazy lady who thought Chalkhead and I were illegal Turkish immigrants (???).

She called the police on us one night and said "I know they're bike thieves and they are so low that they would steal the bolts off of a toilet." Needless to say Chalkhead and I may not

look like the kind of guys you'd take home to Mom but we hardly look like Turkish toilet bolt thieves. *[Editor's note: The preceding opinion is that of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of "Cognition", the SFBMA, its members or any of its affiliates.]*

Also in Vienna as part of the event were the Gold Sprints which Emeroy (Team Satan) of SF, Canadia and Philly fame won. Woo hoo !! The skid competitions and sprints went well. All of this went on with the backdrop of planned parties every night. Many brain cells killed and many hurting livers later, we met to have the group ride to Budapest, Hungary.

There were about 50 people on the ride representing about 10 countries. We rode roughly 80 miles the first day, several hours in the rain. I woke up the next morning with what I thought was a cold but turned out to be the flu. I rode 70 miles nonetheless but after riding in the rain with no raingear, getting chased by a dog and then riding in the dark down gravel paths, I jumped in the support vehicle for the last 10 to sleep on a lawn chair at the campsite. The scenery along the way was beautiful as the bike path snaked along the Danube River.

At the Slovakian border two Messengers from LA were turned back and had to take an alternate route around Slovakia but they got to Budapest

nonetheless.

The second day of the ride we arrived at a campsite that is at the base of a castle that Hungarian kings ruled out of for 600 years. There Jason, Rev. Jim, Nice Tim and I did archery and shot crossbows, checked out the torture chamber and marvelled at the ancient castle where so many important decisions were made and sieges withstood. The next day was the last day of riding. I was still sick so I was in the back of the pack.

Along the way I ran into Joel Metz and America Meredith. We rode with Tone and Hermes of New York City before splitting off. Due to superior routing we beat half the other riders to camp.

Finally we were here: Budapest CMWC 2001.

Our campground was on an island in the Danube. There were bungalows for people to stay in and also room for tents. There was also a swimming pool and a shop that sold beer. The first night was a party for the ages as old friends met, new friends were made and vast quantities of ale consumed.

Oh yeah the races: They were well run and the course was fun and there was a bar on the side that Haddock (from the Tuborg team) and I took advantage of. Two guys from Zurich, Switzerland took first and second places, Pia from Copenhagen placed first for females, two people from SF made the finals: Bernie Corace and

(cont'd on page 4)

COGNITION

President: Damon Votour

Executive Director: Bernie Corace

Secretary: Howard Williams

Treasurer: M. "Rak" Affonso

Layout: Donny Don Don

Masthead Logo: Louie Seastres

Who is the SFBMA?

ESTABLISHED 1990

The San Francisco Bike Messenger Association was first started as a humorous, yet-in-yer-face, answer to the AMCS; if the owners could have a club, so could we.

WHO WE ARE

We are you, if you are a current or former employee of the SF messenger industry. This includes walker, bicycle, moped, motorcycle, and driver messengers, as well as order-takers and dispatchers.

WHAT WE WANT

We want what is well overdue: appropriate compensation for our efforts. This includes a livable wage, health insurance, sick pay, vacation pay, pension plan, equipment compensation, etc. You know, normal workers' rights.

HOW WE WILL GET IT

We will get it by becoming one unified force, and standing up to the entire industry with our demands. In the past, we have proven that we can stick together to help each other out by holding countless benefits, hosting the best Cycle Messenger World Championships of all time, coming together to pay tribute to fallen comrades, holding toy drives for needy kids, the annual Russian River Ride and even things as simple as creating our own underground social scene each and every day of the week. Now that we have a working agreement with the most powerful union in the Bay Area, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, we have the experienced backing to stand up in our industry and achieve our goals.

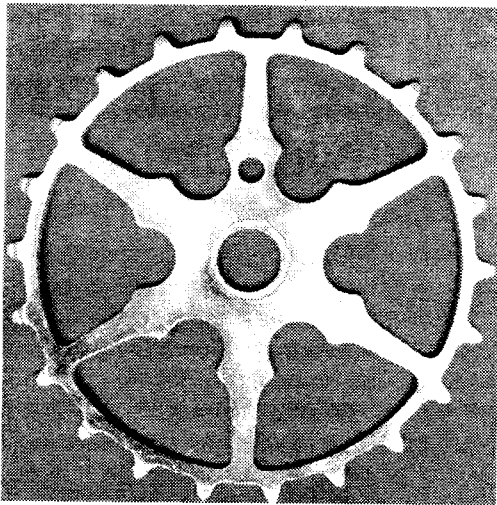
WHAT YOU CAN DO

Volunteer for the SFBMA. You can leave a recording that 415-626-1912. Dues are \$5 each month and may be paid to Damon, Kwai, Rak, Howard or to Victor V-Jer at the Bike Hut on the H20 front. Attend as many events as you can without becoming obnoxious as starlings.

Yes the rumors are true SIX BICYCLE MESSENGERS HAVE SUCCEEDED, AT HAVING THE LARGEST LEGAL SUPPORT MESSENGER COMPANY IN THE STATE, INDICTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

BY CHARLES A. ANNEN
WITH INSIGHT FROM JEFF WEBB

The inside story goes like this. In late October 2000, when Express Network employees were successfully organized and demanding some respect and restitution, we at 1st Legal were dealing with a lot of changes in office personnel associated with some rather heavy handed management tactics imported from the L.A. main office. We all smelled a rat, a Big Fucking Rat. I was first approached by Chris Young, Damon Votour and Jeff Webb, and with reservations (because I had just received a fat raise), held off on signing an ILWU authorization card. I left it that, and thought nothing of it for



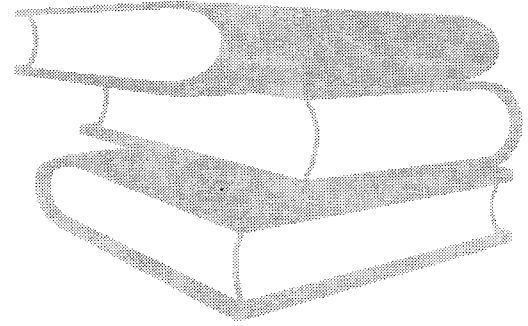
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did. David Tait, Regional Superintendent for 1st legal, put on a compassionate and completely selfish diatribe about, how his life, and his career, and his family and his future would be affected. And all his lackeys nodded their heads in agreement. The greedy pack of selfish bastards made me retch, and I signed an ILWU authorization card the next day and handed it to Chris Young. At first all the bikers involved outright refused to be extorted by these pirates, but on the expert advice from Jerry Martin, ILWU International Organizer, they signed and noted "under duress" next to their signatures. That really

pissed management off and "the heavies" flew in from all over the country to try and intimidate the "Gang of Five", i.e.; Damon Votour, Chris Young, Jeff Webb, Kai Washington and Punk Rock Jim. The heavies included Elisha Gilboa, president of 1st Legal, and all the way from Massachusetts the one and only Thomas McGrath, president of NICA. Mr. McGrath was

convicted a few years back in U.S. District Court for mail and wire fraud while passing forged Workers Comp certificates. (See U.S. vs. McGrath et al. 1-96 cr 102212) One look at NICA's website, www.independent-contractor.com, will reveal that the company only exists to satisfy greedy employers like 1st Legal. "The heavies", the "Gang of Five" and Jerry Martin sat down to hash things out. The results turned into a plethora of unfair labor practices and multiple charges filed by the ILWU on behalf of all employees seeking recognition. The "gang of five" returned to work as independent contractors, except Kai Washington who was home

recuperating from an injury. And incredibly when he returned to work a few days later was fired outright! That was cold, and the war was on. We all continued our organizing efforts and the majority of bikers and drivers had signed authorization cards when Sandro Mascherenas was fired for his organizing activities. We had seen enough, and prepared for a work action against the company. This resulted in another meeting, this time between Dave Tait and the organizing committee, where management threatened to fire everyone of us, replace us with NICA scabs and close the office to boot! We all dutifully filed affidavits at the NLRB reporting continued and egregious unfair labor practices. Within days of these latest round of threats and firings, the company fired two more organizers, Sam Roberts and Chris Young, for charges unfounded. More charges and affidavits at the NLRB followed. We had now gained another organizer, namely James McDonald, who was hired as an IC but made a point to management that he had been misclassified and insisted they follow state and federal guidelines and create an employee status for him, namely, a 7.6% employer contribution to the Social Security Trust fund, an account with the EDD (unemployment insurance), income tax deductions, State disability, and above all Workers' Comp. Insurance. The company refused of course, and James resigned after a month. Jeff Webb, who had protested his IC status on the same grounds for six months, decided to resign for the same reasons as James and in protest over the terminations of Sam and Chris. I resigned in protest over the terminations of my fellow organizers and for being



threatened by the shop bully Alejandro Mendez. Next came Chris Atkinson who filed a charge with the NLRB against 1st Legal for offering, then denying him employment. Management had discovered that his wife Maria was an organizer at Express Network. Most of the original organizing committee at 1st Legal is no longer there, but the management and owners still have to answer to the National Labor Relations Board. This is very important, because this type of anti-union campaigning is a tumor that if allowed to spread, will become malignant throughout the messenger community in San Francisco. The end result of these endeavors, is a complaint filed by the NLRB accusing 1st Legal with multiple "hallmark" unfair labor practices and recommending that the employees included in the bargaining unit and represented by the ILWU be "protected better by issuance of a bargaining order" A bargaining order is issued by an Administrative Law Judge and "orders" the employer to negotiate a contract agreement. Failure to agree would result in a "contempt of court" charge. 1st Legal has the right to appeal and they will, but eventually they will have to enter into contract negotiations with the ILWU and all the employees they represent in this organizing effort. The hearing is at the National Labor Relations Board, 901 Market #306, San Francisco on November 5th at 10:00am.

CMWC & PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT'D FROM PAGE 2)

Nice Tim both from Team Satan. Fish from NYC/Amsterdam -- also on Team Satan -- won the track stand competition. Later that night was a concert with a punk rock Messenger band called

"Messengers Suck" playing. It was Bernie's birthday so myself and several others grabbed him from the outside bar and threw him on our shoulders, ran him into the show and tossed him about.

Meanwhile outside two port-a-potties were lit on fire; by whom no one knows but that was a hulla-baloo. The city of Budapest itself is pretty amazing both in its history and culture. Goods are inexpensive and its easy to find your way around.

I ended up stranded after CMWC due to poor information and the language barrier at the Budapest train station. I was given wrong information from the train officials, missed my train (the last one) which in turn



Chris "Nectar" and Maria Atkinson

made me miss my flight out of Vienna. Needless to say I was a bit miffed, luckily I ran into Spencer and Heather from D.C. and they let me stay in their room at

the hostel. As everywhere else was packed, we took a hydro-foil boat back to Vienna along the Danube. We

Stephanie and Broiler

got there late. I couldn't get a hold of anyone and slept behind a statue of Schubert in Stadt Park, using my Zo bags for a pillow.

I had to sell my Cannondale to make up for the air fare. I hung out with Messengers at Hermes, Vienna's finest bummy Couriers. They put a crate of beer in the fridge for their Messengers, have a pot of coffee brewing and then feed them!! The Couriers pay a token fee for this. They also have a shower there as well. Boy we have some catching up to do!!

Onwards Farewell and good luck to Chris "Nectar" and Maria Atkinson who have moved to Oregon. Also to Matt "Broiler," Stephanie and Xia Royston who also moved to Oregon. And CONGRATULATIONS to Scott "Dumptruck" and Doreen for the birth of their child, Ellie Ray

And on a very sad note: Farewell to our brother Niels "Bones" Miller. His smile and friendship will be missed by all. We love you wherever you are. Your contributions to our community and the SFBMA meant more than you ever knew. You touched us all. See ya in the Big Bar in the sky . . . P.S. yer buyin'!

In regards to the WTC tragedy, the NYBMA rose to the challenge, delivering supplies around the clock between supply centers and needy people. True heroes -- most doing double shifts. [The NYBMA effort is also mentioned in Serenity's article -- Editor]

TREASURER'S REPORT

Dues, Dues, Dues

Well as we go into this October I thought I would harp on the dues issue. The SFBMA, working with the ILWU, has raised up Messenger income and conditions more than any other factor. [See Survey Results -- Editor]. Where Messenger Companies once considered us morons to be taken advantage of, they now realize we can get together and stand up for our rights on an effective level. Companies now do all kinds of coddling, etc. of their Messengers, trying to keep away the union movement.

We've successfully waged battles with Speedway, Pro Mess, Citysprint, ENI and the struggle continues at First Legal. We've worked with Muni drivers for a better relationship with transit. We put out the first safety manual as well as fought for Bikers' rights behind the Chris Robertson murder.

So show your support. Monthly dues are \$5 or you can pay \$50 for a year, saving \$10, AND get a free patch. You can also buy official SFBMA shirts and patches.

Just look for Rak, Damon, Howard or Bernie for details or call Rak at 510-595-0638.

Thanks,
Rak

You're in Our World Now *cont'd from page one*

on similar amounts coming from his admirers in other OIL states as well. And where do his followers in Saudi Arabia and other OIL states get their money? From American car drivers every time they fill up at the pump. The American addiction to automobiles and OIL -- which has already caused so much death and destruction literally fueled the attacks on September 11. As Jesus Christ says "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

The comfortable America that laments its lost security must realize that it has endangered the other America. Now the comfortable America is also endangered. But as the Chinese teach us danger is opportunity. The dangers of September 11 united us as the comfortable America joined the other America in learning once again that security in this life will always be an illusion. The martyrs -- I refuse to call them mere victims -- of September 11 were from the comfort-

able America and the other America. Let their martyrdom unite us all in one America. Now we must reinforce this unity to end the injustices endured by the other America as well as find the solution to weaken the terrorist threat. Indeed one will not happen without the other.

In recent days "God Bless America" has been getting a lot of play -- and rightly so. This song was written by Irving Berlin, an immigrant who rose from the slums of New York City to become America's favorite songwriter. This song inspired Americans to overcome the hardships of the Great Depression and then World War II. But there's another inspiring song from that era that we should be listening to: "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land". Woody Guthrie's song still speaks to both Americas in hopes that finally at long last we will become one America.

4 **THANK YOU TO THE BAY GUARDIAN AND THE SF CALL FOR GETTING OUR NEWS RACK BACK!**

MESSENGER CAUCUS BY RAK

Now that the Messenger Rights Movement is well established, it's time for Messengers to set future working will be having its first Messenger Caucus since March 1998 for working conditions and standards. Messengers from across the spectrum of companies are needed to discuss and define working standards.

This is a great chance for Messengers to have a say on important issues. So step up! To participate call Rak: 510-595-0638.

MESSENGER WISDOM

Not just a bitchfest: we're getting s**t done!!" President Damon Votour's insightful analysis of SFBMA meetings (the next one's on Thursday the 11th).

Charlie Lutge (Speedway Dispatcher): "97 where ya at?" 97 (Speedway Messenger): "Passing a famous Messenger home at 22nd & Potrero." C. Lutge: "Is it famous by accident?"



John Zirolis pearls at the race

On September 1, Godspeed celebrated its 2nd anniversary by throwing our first Alleycat Torch'er Match!!! 21 racers participated, 17 finished, 2 dropped out, 2 DQed. We really wanted it to be fun and adventurous with special bonuses and secret warp zones. But... there's something about watching your bro's suffer on a Saturday afternoon.

It was a mystical journey through time and space. Yes, it was a long fucking race! "I HATE YOUR RACE!"...you sadistic motherfuckers!-(Spiller) We thought it would be fun for everyone to flatten a penny somehow along the way. But from the looks of some of the pieces at the finish, it appeared that mad frustration was the most common tool. I hope the ice cream

ALLEYCAT Torch'er Match (a.k.a. The Unicorn & the Barbwire)

by Brandon Correia



Chris Stevens and Spiller

treats helped cool off some of the steam.

Congratulations to all who finished! Once again, Richie "Red" impressed us all with his fixie magic. Jason Whitehead, Tony from Jetset, Scott, and Chris Stevens all raced hard, challenging the leadgroup throughout the competition. I guess a few lessons were learned that day. Yup, it is possible to smash a coin with your U-lock. Neverthink that you've ridden too far. And never play Rochambeau with John Zarolis. That lucky SOB won the race and a new bike! Thanks to everyone who showed up!

Team Godspeed

POP QUIZ!!#1



YOU MAY RECOGNIZE THIS SMILING MESSENGER, BUT CAN YOU GUESS WHERE HE IS STANDING IN THIS PHOTO? LOOK FOR THE ANSWER IN THE NEXT COGNITION!

SF Alley Cat Challenge

Standings after 6 races
(2 are remaining --see Calendar)

Super Mike (Godspeed)	16
Richie (Red Hot)	9
Ali (Godspeed)	7
Brandon (Godspeed)	7
Nice Tim (Cupid)	7
Jason Whitehead (Speedway/ALL City)	6
John Z. (Jetset)	6
Natasha (Citysprint)	6
Christian (Specialized)	5
Bru	4
Giant Erik (King)	4





HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

By JOEL METZ

My CMWC trip started way back in late May, but I don't quite have enough space for all that, so I'll fast forward to late July, when we all left Vienna, where a good number of us had been at the CMWC pre-event "bixs traxs and resistance" for the past weekend. The ride to Budapest took a grand total of 3 days, and took us through some fantastic scenery along the Danube - some of which we got to appreciate more than others... It was, well... an "interesting" voyage, especially the first night out... Can you say "messengers getting lost in foreign countries where no one speaks the language and few people have maps, let alone know where they're going?" I knew you could. Never have I met up with people so happy to find someone with headlights on their bike. First night, we get into camp at 2am (and that was the first of us! people were rolling in until 3...), in complete darkness, after taking around 12 hours to ride what should have been a 5 hour ride. The campground manager and staff were absolute saints - this was my first real experience in Hungary, and they were off to a good start - anyone who stays up that late (we were supposed to be there at 10pm) and then proceeds to have goulash and pasta ready for about 50 drunken messengers gets points in my book.

The second day on the road was a definite improvement. Less aimless wandering, more idea where we were going, and we got there before dark. (always good) To top that off, once again, the restaurant near the campsite reopened just to make pasta from all of us. Next morning, we only had a few hours ride to make Budapest, so we took it easy, and left late - all the more reason to ride back up the road, and either a) check out the medieval castle on top of the hill or b) waste time on the alpenslide. I, personally, chose the latter, and accomplished one of my goals, flipping a roller luge at 30mph. Nice. The ride from there was

cont'd on p.8



The monument of Heroes depicts the Magyar tribal chiefs who founded the Hungarian kingdom. photo: Tim Giller



The monument of Heroes

photo: Tim Giller



CMWC 2001 Budapest

Last summer in Philadelphia, when the vote came in that the 9th annual Cycle Messenger World Championships would be held in Budapest, Hungary, many people, myself included, immediately decided to be there. The idea of visiting a beautiful Eastern European city where you could drink beers for pennies was just too compelling. Maybe that's why San Francisco was so well represented. With a turnout of 20 people or so, we possibly had the largest crowd from any North American city. Many of us converged on the city of Vienna for a pre-event called Bixs Traxs Resistance. Though muted slightly by a persistent rain we all had a great time, a few people managed to spend a night in the bushes and Chalkhead fell into the Danube with his pants around his ankles. The Vienna messengers put on a couple alley cat races, gold sprints, track bike contests, a Critical Mass ride through the heart of the city and several parties. To finish off the events a mass 3 day ride to Budapest was arranged, which true to messenger form got off to a late start. This combined with the logistical nightmare of getting a group of some 80 cyclists across 2 international borders resulted in a highly memorable pitch black midnight ride through Hungarian villages, arriving at our campground at 2:30 a.m. to a feast of goulash and beer. The remainder of this ride was less eventful and we all arrived in Budapest more or less in one piece. Budapest as expected is an attractive Old World city with many cobblestone streets and magnificent architecture. The city is actually a conglomeration of two ancient towns, old Buda on the west and Pest on the east, with the Danube River running in between. For accomodation the local messengers set up camping on an island in the river called Obeday Szeget. This was the focus of most of the events for the week. Each night was an enjoyable blur of parties which included performances by local bands and DJs and a couple drinking spots. Each morning they had a simple breakfast for everyone and one night we shared a communal meal of traditional Hungarian goulash. An added blessing was the swimming pool at the center of camp. Not only did this provide a location for a spontaneous belly flop contest but it was



photo: Tim Giller

also the perfect cure for waking up hung-over on an hour and a half sleep. Lest I forget there were some races and stuff. The course for the main race was easily one of the best ever. The start/finish line was inside the center of a 100 year old velodrome. After exiting through a tunnel, the course wound around a 60s era soccer stadium, along gravel paths and past an old sculpture garden

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

BY JOEL METZ
cont'd from p.6

pretty much a straight shot to Budapest, and most people just took off once we broke camp. Me, I destroyed my pedals about 20km from our destination - a mechanical failure which would haunt me the rest of the weekend. Budapest, upon arrival, was fantastic - this was my first trip into Eastern Europe, and it was a trip. Being out in the country was one thing, but once you started getting in towards any sort of city, the architecture of the cold war was everywhere. Big, blocky apartment complexes that looked more like jails than anything else, ramshackle warehouses, all that. After some pretty hairy riding on the shoulder (yeah, right) of some main roads, I finally tracked down the island the campsite and HQ was located on - DAMN! After a quick look around, it was easy to see that the crew from Budapest had procured easily the best camp area we've ever seen at a CMWC - huge campground, plenty of tables around the little snack hut, some bungalows for those who didn't want to rough it quite as much, and, holy of holies - a swimming pool! (soon to become home of more than a few drunken bellyflop contests). They'd outdone themselves here. I guess it pays to be budgeting your event in Eastern Europe based on an entry fee in US dollars...

A few of the highlights of the non-race events set up by the Budapest messengers - they really outdid themselves: Free home-cooked goulash (here you might think of goulash as some unrecognizable glop stew, but goulash in Hungary is *"the"* dish. We had 2 types, both excellent. Fills up a hungry messenger like nobody's business.) for everyone both nights of the weekend. Did I mention the swimming pool (every spare moment, we were in it). Crazy two-stage races on pedal boats and surreys, in the Budapest city park. Fantastic trials demo by some local Hungarian trails guys. The most expansive breakfast I've ever seen at a CMWC (they *"never"* ran out of food. never. that's saying something). Great concert and party space (the island becomes one of Europe's biggest festivals the weekend after the CMWC, so there were tents all ready to go).

As for the race itself - I nearly shit myself when I saw the venue. The old Olympic facility from back in the 50s or so when they were in Budapest. Start/Finish in the center of the biggest (400-some-odd meters) and oldest (1890s) velodrome in the world. Full sound system. HUGE racecourse, over all sorts of terrain. All the "streets" had names, and checkpoints were designated as

addresses on the streets - it wasn't as simple as going to the CCB checkpoint - you had to check your package or manifest to determine if you were going to 3, 5 or 7 CCB street. The format was influenced heavily by the format of the final at the ECMC 2001 in Rotterdam, which in itself was one of the best Championship races I'd ever ridden in. Very realistic - you had to make decisions fast, you had to route yourself smart - it was really easy to screw yourself up if you weren't paying attention to your plan; it didn't always pay off to be going as fast as you possibly could, because you just might ride past your best routing that way.

On the down side, everything race-related ran chronically late (and by chronically late, I mean 4-5 hours late, or more). Interestingly enough, no one seemed to care. Perhaps that had something to do with the fact that you could ride the velodrome at will, with music blaring over the PA, and plenty of food to be had, at cheap Hungarian prices. Everyone sat together in the shade, on the bleachers of the velodrome, trading t-shirts and stories, taking pictures... It made for one of the most cohesive community-type venues of a CMWC yet, simply because it was a nice, central place for everyone to get away from the blazing sun.

Usually at a CMWC, when things are running late, someone will come up to me and bitch about the lateness, even if it's only 30 minutes. This year, no one complained. Remarkable. Even when the fixed gear skid got cancelled simply because we ran out of time and light, no one seemed to really be *"that"* bothered. They were all having too much fun, it seemed. I'm not entirely sure about the rest of the SF riders, but my race went horribly. One checkpoint in, and I tore 2 spokes out of the flange of my rear hub, and that was it for me. Discouraging, and combined with my trashed pedals, kinda wrecked riding around for the rest of the weekend for me (and ended up resulting in my early departure from Budapest, rather than staying the 2 weeks I had planned to), but again, there was plenty to keep one occupied, even with a fucked-up bike. Overall, a great event. Some people still rate



Even when taking a break, Jason Whitehead keeps his "game face" on!
photo: Tim Giller

SF or Zurich higher in their ranking of best CMWC, but I feel Budapest gave all that a run for its money.

Sure, the event could've run more smoothly. Sure, things could've been on time. But the fact remains that there was a kick-ass time to be had, and the logistical problems just didn't seem to matter in the face of the facts that we had an Olympics sports complex and an island in the Danube basically all to ourselves. Just *"try"* to pull that off anywhere in North America or Western Europe. We may never see the likes of that venue again. Next year, for the 10th anniversary of the CMWC, we're headed to Copenhagen, home of drivers who actually look in their rear-view mirrors before opening their doors, and pedestrians who look before stepping into the bike lane. It's going to blow some minds amongst the North American set. The idea of holding a Critical Mass there is almost irrelevant - they've already got all the things that people in the States are trying to gain support for by holding a Mass... I've seen the race course, the campground, and the place that'll be the party central. They're all within minutes of each other, about 5-10 minutes from downtown Copenhagen, and less than 5 minutes from Christiania. Start saving now. You *"don't"* want to miss it. The Danes are pulling out all the stops, and it's gonna be a great event. If you need more info on it, find me, or check out <http://www.cbma.dk/> - there'll be full info up there fairly shortly. -joel

CONGRATULATIONS to Joel for winning the 2001 Markus Cook Award !!. Named for the late and beloved veteran messenger and Charter Member of the SFBMA, the Markus Cook Award is given to the Messenger who has done the most for the worldwide Messenger community. As anyone who's ever been to a CMWC knows Joel certainly has earned this honor. -- Editor

82 surveys were turned in 76 respondents came from a total of 26 companies (including one collective) and 6 more were self employed. As promised companies and individuals are not identified.

Respondents

Job title: 60 bike messengers (about one-fifth of the estimated 300 SF bike messengers)-- 2 walkers -- 3 drivers -- 9 bikers/indy owners (incl. 1 freight trike and one self described "Asshole")-- 1 former biker -- 2 full time dispatchers -- 5 biker/dispatchers (incl. one biker/dispatcher/office worker) 71 Males, 8 Females, 3 ? (hey this is SF - actually their names weren't clear) Rookies (less than 1 year) : 12 Journey(wo)men (between 1 and 5 years): 27 Veterans (5 to 10 years): 17 Extreme Veterans (10 to 25 years): 26

We realize the above descriptions are arbitrary. They're basically there as guidelines.

Safety, Pay Structure and other Working Conditions

Helmets are required at 5 companies of the 26 reporting companies. Messengers at only 6 of the 26 companies reported having safety plans.

On the bright side, uniforms are required at only 4 companies of the 26.

Except for one legal service, no major company (more than 10 Messengers) has independent contractors. All other medium and large Messenger firms have employees only. As expected employees are covered by Workers Comp, independent contractors are not. The vast majority of Bike Messengers are paid by commission. Except for a few legal services and a digital company that hires its own Messengers "in house," all respondents worked for companies that pay by commission. Commission payouts range from 40.5 to 70 %. One long time major company does not inform their Messengers of their commission amounts. Messengers at Professional and Speedway are represented by ILWU Local 6. Cupid is a collective.

Health, Dental and Retirement Plans

15 companies offer health plans

with 4 reportedly paying 100 %. Of those 4, three are small "indies" and one is a non-courier service hiring "in house" Messengers. Of the remaining 11, the company pays from "10% at most" to 75% with 50% being a common figure. 12 companies offer dental plans with 3 "indies" reportedly paying 100%. Of the remaining 9, company payments range from 10% to 80%. Only 5 companies offer 401(k) plans. None offer pensions. Of the 5 offering 401(k), the two union companies provide co-payments -- one at 50% the other at 25%. Two other companies offer no co-payments -- only access to the plan.

Answers were unclear regarding the 5th company's 401(k) Many Messengers were unaware of the amount and per cent of their companies' contributions to health, dental or 401(k) plans. There was more lack of information regarding 401(k) plans than health and dental plans.

Other Benefits Safety bonus -- one union company ... Rain bonus -- one union company Annual or other bonuses-- 4 companies Holiday pay -- 5 companies..... Sick pay -- one union company ... SFBMA dues -- 2 companies ... Food -- one collective Vacation or Paid Time Off -- 4 companies Profit sharing 2 small companies- 3 companies offer NONE of the benefits listed above!

Number of Daily Tags and Income and Work Schedules

Daily number of tags done each day ranged widely as did Messengers' income per day. Some Messengers working at small legal service companies reported doing as few as 6 tags per day and making \$150-170 per day! Unfortunately, Messengers working for medium and large legal services did not share in this success. Messengers working at those "legals" made no more than Messengers at other companies despite performing the filing, researching and other extra work

demanding of a legal service. Messenger.

At "regular" Messenger companies, Bicycles



Couriers reported daily earnings from \$80 to \$250. While this is a significant improvement from the pre-union era, most Messengers still feel tag prices and payouts are still low especially in light of the recent and dramatic increase cost of living in the Bay Area.

Of the 65 Messengers answering the question regarding average daily work hours, 38 (about 58%) reported working 8.5 hours or more per day. A few reported 10 hour days to be their norm.

Except for Couriers at two small "indies," Messengers still work 5 days per week. While the 4 day work week is appealing to many, most Messengers simply can't afford to take many days off.

Tag Prices & Payouts

On the very important matter of tag prices, there is a dramatic difference between legal service companies and all other companies. Messengers from 19 companies responded to the question asking the minimum price of a tag with answers ranging from \$4.00 to \$25. Three companies charged over \$20 as a minimum price. All three are legal service firms. At the other 16 companies the minimum price ranges from the aforementioned \$4 to \$10. Two companies reported \$4 minimum tag prices ; one of those companies has since gone out of business. Messengers from 13 companies reported that their prices have increased since October 1998. No companies have been reported as decreasing or even maintaining their 1998 prices. Messengers feel that tag prices remain too low. 59 Messengers answered the specific question regarding a proper minimum tag price.

cont'd on page 11

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Answers ranged from \$3 to \$25 for a minimum tag price with the average answer being \$8.81. 33 Messengers supported \$8 or more for a minimum tag price.

Messengers also feel that tag payouts should be increased significantly. 65 Messengers responded to the question asking what should be the minimum tag payout (i.e. how much should the Messenger get for a Financial District regular tag). Answers ranged from \$2.37 to \$25 with an average of \$5.67 per tag. 40 Messengers supported tag payouts of \$5 or more. Although tag prices have increased in the last three years, most of us feel they have not kept pace with inflation in the SF Bay Area.

Dispatching

Of the 24 surveyed companies still in business, 5 use Free Call, 17 use Allocation, 3 use other dispatch methods.

Free Agency (the right to work at 2 companies at once)

Free Agency : Yes 59, No 13, Don't know/no answer 10. Among the 9 indy company owners the tally was 6 to 3 "Yes"

MAJOR FACTOR for higher tag prices (more than one answer accepted)

Pro-Union Messengers 56 (68%) (pro-Union received 12 minor factors) Citysprint Messengers 34 (41%) (Citysprint messengers received 19 minor factors) Independent companies 31 (38%) (Indies received 21 minor factors)

Improvement of economy 30 (38%) (Economy received 21

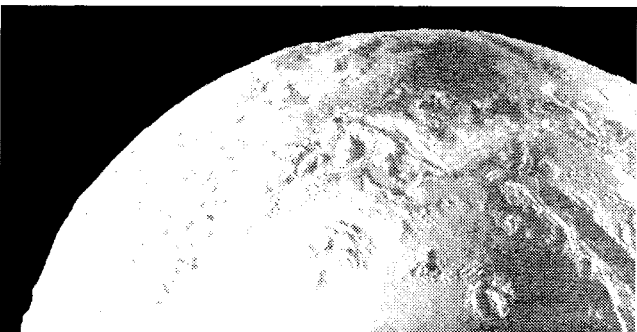
minor factors) Other 11 (14%) ("Other" received 7 minor factors) Major companies 7 (9%) (Major companies received 20 minor factors) "Other" included higher prices (especially gas) and the relatively low un-employment rate. Of the 8 Rookies, 4 (50%) ranked pro-Union Messengers as a Major Factor; 3 (37%) ranked Indies as Major; 2 (25 %) ranked Citysprint Messengers as Major. Other factors received one or less. Only 5 Rookies responded to this part of the survey. The 3 not responding felt too inexperienced to respond to this part. Of the 29 Journey(women), 19 (65%) ranked pro-Union Messengers as a Major Factor; 11 (38%) ranked Citysprint Messengers as Major; other factors had 9 or lower. Of the 18 Veterans, 14 (77 %) ranked pro-Union Messengers as a Major Factor; 10 (55%) ranked Citysprint Messengers as Major; 10 (55%) ranked Indies as Major; Economy received 9 (50%) or less; other factors received much less. Of the 27 "Mega Vets", 19 (70%) ranked pro-Union Messengers as Major ; 11 (40%) ranked Citysprint Messengers as Major; 9 (33%) ranked the Economy ; and 7 (26 %) ranked the Indies. Other factors received much less ranking.

PRIORITIES

As expected, the first two priorities were Higher Pay and Health plan (100% paid by company). Of the 74 Messengers who answered this question, 62 rated Higher Pay as a No. 1 priority and 5 more rated it their No.2 priority. 22 Messengers rated Health Plan as a No. 1 priority (Health Plan and Higher Pay were tied for No. 1 priority on many survey forms) and 29 Messengers rated Health Plan as their No. 2 priority. Dental Plan (100% company paid) was the 3rd highest priority and Vacation Pay was 4th. THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS



Victor V of the
Bike Hut.
He collects dues
and such.



10-9 DAY IS COMING!

On 10-8 in the
evening there will be
a party at 255 9th
Street

10-9 messenger
Appreciation Party
NOON @ the Wall



IT'S NOT TOO LATE!



Know of great rack location? Call 415-431-2453 x8 @ the SFBC! And in a bit of time, you just might see this meticulous detailer chalking a rack for you.

CMWC 2001 Budapest

BY TIM GILLER

cont'd from p. 7

of communist era statues. There were steps to bunny hop, stairs to climb and a few tight alleys to follow. The race was challenging and fun, to say the least. San Francisco had 2 finalists, both riding for Team Satan: myself and Bernie Corace. Bernie no doubt made a deal with the Dark Lord to accomplish this. [Editor's note: The preceding opinion is that of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of "Cognition", the SFBMA, its members or any of its affiliates.] Ritchie Ditta also did very well, getting 2nd place in the Track Stand competition and 3rd in the Backwards Circle.

The efforts and the hospitality of the Hungarian messengers were wonderful. The schedule was a bit off, but that's nothing new for these events (I think some records might have been broken for late starts and the Track Skid never happened). However they pulled off a great event with a small number of messengers and their friends. Budapest seems to have a tight crew that reminds me a lot of our own community.

Three cities put in bids for the CMWC 2002: Seattle, Houston and Copenhagen. They all had good proposals but in the end the vote went to Copenhagen. So for the 10th CMWC, it'll be back to Europe.

Haiku by Howie

*This is what you get
For being a Messenger
This free "Cognition!"*

CDT UPDATE

BY SERENITY ENRIQUEZ, FELLOW MESSENGER

As we watched 1000s of people perish in New York City last week, NYC messengers were voluntarily humping double-loaded bags of medical supplies and messages between hospitals. Telephones were down, the roads were impassable to cars. I would like to commend these couriers that stepped up. They helped many in the struggle for response and recovery. This spring, I would like to ask my fellow San Francisco messengers to step up as well. We are forming a trained disaster response team called Courier Disaster Technicians Response Team of San Francisco.

Upon completion of the basic training, a CDT will be able to treat road rash and other on-the-road accidents, manage in a disaster, and form a response team. Direct untrained volunteers, light search and rescue, and many other ass-saving skills. Train for yourself, train for your community. The life you save may be your own, or it may be a friend's. I urge everyone to consider this opportunity.

A certified CDT (courier disaster technician) will be issued an ID and a patch identifying them as such. These will be disbursed at the potluck graduation party

at the end of training. All workshops will take place on Saturdays.

Basic CDT's will be required to know basic first aid/ CPR (6-8 hours), and take a disaster response class (about 16-18 hours). To advance in the ranks of CDT, become a licensed amateur radio technician. We will need communicators on our teams. It is cheap (\$25), and only takes one day. Other ways to advance, is to become a first responder (advanced first aid), train in pet first aid, take search and rescue classes, learn about ICS (incident-command system), or train in an array of other response skills.

An upcoming class, we have a HAM CRAM. An intensive one-day study/ test for your amateur radio license. It will be in Foster City October 20, 2001 with a testing/material fee of \$25. Call Ross Peterson to RSVP ASAP because the class fills quickly! He's at 650-570-5558. Be sure to tell him you are a CDT.

Until next time, keep the rubber side down, and keep your eyes/ mind open! www.it.lsdangerous.com
SF_CDT@yahoo.com 415-430-1269x
8768 760 Market #315 SF 94102



POP QUIZ! #2! DO YOU RECOGNIZE THESE BIKE STUDENTES? QUESTION
WHICH FAMOUS BIKE AD IS IT? ANSWER IN THE NEXT COGNITION!

DISCOUNTS for SFBMA Members are available at the following places. Patronize these friendly establishments! And look for *Cognition* at these hot spots!

The following bike shops give 10% discount on parts to SFBMA members:

- Foxy Flyer Bike Shop, 3330 Steiner St., SF, 415-674-1910
- Big Swingin' Cycles, 1122 Taraval, SF, 415-661-2462 (also 10% discount on labor)
- Road Rage Bike Rental and Repair, 1063 Folsom, SF, 415-255-1351 (also 15% discount on labor)
- Freewheel Bike Shop, 1920 Hayes St., SF, 415-752-9195 and 980 Valencia, SF, 415-643-9213
- Pedal Revolution, 3075 21st St., 415-641-1264
- Cycle Sports, 3241 Grand, Oakland, 510-444-7900 (also 10% discount on labor)
- Missing Link, 1988 Shattuck, 510-843-7471, 1963 Shattuck, 510-843-4763

Other Established friendly(s)

- Cassidy's Bar, 1145 Folsom, SF, 415-241-9990—\$2 beer specials M-F, 6-8pm for working messengers 21 & over
- The Sports Basement, 1301 6th St., SF, 415-437-1415
- Sam Laser Graphics, some very serious messenger discounts, 415-864-2588

And a brief thank-you to the couriers at Godspeed and Cupid for paying their yearly dues in full.

COMMUNITY

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

FRI. 10/5

ALLEY CAT RACE #7 OF THE SF ALLEY CAT CHALLENGE, DON'T BE A HERO BE A ZERO BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE FINE MESSENGERS AT ESPRESSO @7PM SYDNEY WALTON PARK@ DAVIS AND JACKSON

MON. 10/8 PM

MESSENGER APPRECIATION EVENING PARTY, ILWU LOCAL 6 HALL, 255 9TH ST.

TUES 10/9

12 NOON -- MESSENGER APPRECIATION DAY!!! AT THE WALL

THURS 10/11

7P.M. -- SFBMA GENERAL MEETING AT 255 9TH ST.

SAT. 10/13

9 A.M. CAMPING TRIP !!-- ANGEL ISLAND, MEET AT BLUE & GOLD FERRY, PIER 41 (NOT THE FERRY BLDG.!) FREE TO ALL SFBMA MEMBERS WITH DUES PAID FOR SEPT. & OCT.-- OR \$10 -- EITHER WAY A DEAL YOU CAN'T BEAT!

SAT. 10/27

12 NOON -- BIKETOBERFEST ALLEY CAT, FINAL SF ALLEY CAT CHALLENGE AT SOUTH PARK

MON. 11/5

10 A.M. -- NLRB HEARINGS: MESSENGERS VS. 1ST LEGAL TO GAIN RIGHTS FOR OUR BROS & SISTAS AT 1ST LEGAL -- 901 MARKET, #306 --YOU CAN WALK IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR (JUST SAY "I'M HERE FOR THE 1ST LEGAL CASE!")

THURS. 11/8

7 P.M. -- SFBMA MEETING AT 255 9TH ST.

NOVEMBER

SOMETIME IN NOV. CAUCUS -- SEE ARTICLE BY RAK

SAT. NOV. 10

VICTOR'S B-DAY PARTY AND BIKE SWAP ALL DAY & NIGHT @ BIKE HUT

SAT. NOV. 17

CHRIS ROBERTSON DINNER AND BIKE SWAP DAY& NIGHT@BIKE HUT.

CERTAIN SUNDAYS. SF BIKE BALLET PRACTICE, 3:30 PM, BELOW RANDALL MUSEUM, NORTH OF STATES ST., ALL SKILLS, ALL AGES! CALL 415-864-2588 FOR INFO

COGNITION is the newsletter of the San Francisco Bike Messenger Association, an organization dedicated to the improvement of work conditions for SF's Messenger industry.

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255 Ninth Street.

Our home page is at:
<http://www.messengers.org/sfbma/>
and e-mail is: Magpie@echo.com



***In Memory of Neils 'Bones' Miller
1971-2001"***