



Bicycle Access Council News & Digest

www.BicycleAccess-PA.org

Special Edition

August-September 2006

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It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania!

August 2006 marks a milestone for the **Bicycle Access Council (BAC)**. *Five years ago*, BAC launched its first membership event in Altoona, Pennsylvania. From that date, with a small number of supporting members, BAC has increased its membership base and has established itself as the only state-wide advocacy forum and ombudsman for Pennsylvania bicyclists. Today, BAC is recognized by the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and many members of the General Assembly.

To mark the occasion of this Fifth Anniversary, here's a review of how BAC got started and how your membership and donations support bicycling advocacy in Pennsylvania.

The Bicycle Access Council was created in 2001 when it was recognized that there was no organization to represent on-the-road cyclists. Rail Trails, mountain biking and sanctioned racing were all represented by respectable organizations, but there was no statewide group to represent club riders or the single bicyclist who just wanted to enjoy riding their bike when and where they'd like.

So, to meet that need, a legal entity was created which included becoming incorporated in Pennsylvania, obtaining IRS recognition as a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization, establishing a board of directors and selecting an executive director.

Now, the Bicycle Access Council serves as a clearinghouse for information. Many phone calls and e-mails are received and answered weekly on a range of topics. Whenever a direct answer can't be provided, it can be re-directed to someone who can.

An often-used expression says, "90% of success is showing up." The Bicycle Access Council "shows up" a lot. To get the

recognition and equal standing as a voice representing bicyclists, it is extremely important to attend those meetings and events that make transportation policy and affect bicyclists' rights on the roadway.

What are these meetings and events that matter? Here is a partial list that the Bicycle Access Council attends on a regular basis:

Pennsylvania Pedalcycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PPAC)—quarterly.

PA Southeast Bicycle Issues Task Force—quarterly.

PennDOT Bike/Ped Coordinators' annual meeting

PennDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Committee

PA Mobility Plan™ stakeholders meeting

This is a new comprehensive Commonwealth plan to replace Penn Moves™. A multi-modal long range plan for Pennsylvania

National Bike Summit—hosted in Washington, DC by the L.A.B.

Many Pennsylvania Bicycle Club meetings

It's important to support a statewide organization to ensure there is one in place for unique responses as needed. It could be a single cyclist being harassed by law enforcement officers, municipalities that want to ban bicyclists from local roads, or shock-jocks on a radio station that need a response. These are actual examples where the Bicycle Access Council has been called upon to respond and has had favorable outcomes.

Ed note: The Bicycle Access Council has issued a monthly News & Digest since Jan 2005 via e-mail. Members without internet access or certain internet ISPs have prevented members from receiving these messages. If you have not been receiving these issues electronically and would like to receive copies mailed via USPS, just send us a note. Please include any street or e-mail address changes.

Traffic Justice Institute

Executive Director, Joe Stafford will be attending the biennial ProWalk/ProBike Conference in Madison, Wisconsin in early September. This is a gathering of over 600 professional advocates from around the country. This year an extra day was added to include an interactive session—Traffic Justice Institute. The goal is to formulate a national platform about road safety—holding drivers accountable for their actions and enabling the full use of every enforcement technology. Participating in this effort is critical to the mission of BAC.

BAC Hosts 4th Bike Club Conference

The *Bicycle Access Council* hosted its 4th annual Pennsylvania Bicycle Club Conference on April 1, 2006 in York, PA. Bicycle Clubs were invited to attend this meeting to learn about and share their experiences with other Pennsylvania bicycle clubs.

The conference is meant to showcase Best Practices. This was an opportunity for new club officers to gain confidence and insight about their duties and responsibilities and for established clubs to show leadership from experience. A full agenda of topics was covered. This year, there were two special speakers.

A Special Thank You

Many who signed up during the first few months of the BAC membership launch are still supporting members. A special *thank you* is extended to:

Roxann & Dan Bare
John Donouge
Ken Edmonds
Bill Hoffman
Mac Heebner
Judy & Alan Hurlbut
Kyle Kemp
John & Sue Kiehl
Lance Minnich
Rodney Moseman
Dan Rappoport
Catherine & Bill Ruhling
Brian Sanders
Peggy & Joe Schott
John Schubert
Dean Seigman
Reuben Weaver, III
Sara Emily Weidner

Membership Appeal

To maintain credibility among PennDOT and Legislators, BAC is striving to build individual memberships for a larger grass roots constituency. We are asking current members to help recruit new members.

New members also help to financially support the goals of the Bicycle Access Council. Please encourage your cycling friends to join and support BAC.

Opportunity Out of Scandal

Although the Tour de France win for Pennsylvanian Floyd Landis ended in scandal, the initial public euphoria was an opportunity to promote bicycling. The following editorial letter was submitted to the York [County] Sunday News just before the doping scandal broke. The editors liked it and ran it anyway on July 30. This was not meant to dwell on professional racing or Floyd Landis, but the Bicycle Access Council did receive several phone calls and emails requesting the Pennsylvania Bicycle Driver's Manual as a result. Here's the full text:

Sharing the Limelight and the Road with Floyd Landis ...

Pennsylvania has a new favorite son--Floyd Landis, who captured the *maillot jaune*, the yellow jersey, last Sunday as the winner of the Tour de France. This shy Mennonite boy from Lancaster County has brought pride to his hometown.

Back home, everyone was beaming with excitement and pride. Local TV news coverage has featured Floyd's parents, the local bicycle retailer who got him started in racing, former teachers, friends and neighbors. Even the European press is treating Floyd Landis with dignity and respect, unlike seven times Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong who came off as an arrogant American.

But, there is something else to consider. Floyd's parents were concerned when he bicycled on roadways for training. "It's dangerous out there," they were quoted to say. Well, the danger is not the roadway--it's the motor vehicle drivers who don't understand the rules of the road or has the patience or skills to interact with bicyclists on the roadway.

The Pennsylvania Vehicle Code is very clear about the rules of the road and that bicycles are defined as vehicles. Most statutes governing the rules of the road are based on the *first come, first serve* principle. Share-the-Road signs are often installed to remind motor vehicle drivers of this, but are mostly misinterpreted or ignored.

A person *driving* a bicycle properly on a Pennsylvania roadway does not have to get out of the way, or yield, to a vehicle coming up from behind so another vehicle can pass.

Said another way, a bicyclist on the roadway is not taking up your space! A bicyclist is entitled to the use of a full lane to be safe and continue on an intended route.

There is no "far right rule" for bicyclists in Pennsylvania, although most bicyclists will keep to the right to allow overtaking when it's reasonably safe to do so. How far to the right a bicyclist will travel depends on the road conditions--sewer grates, debris, parked cars, etc. will usually require a bicyclist to travel in the right-tire track of the roadway to maintain a margin of safety. A booklet published by PennDOT, the *Pennsylvania Bicycle Driver's Manual* (Pub 380) is available free of charge and explains how to operate a bicycle effectively and in accordance with the Vehicle Code.

With fuel costs escalating and obesity increasing for adults and youth, bicycling for transportation and fitness makes sense. Bicycling is a good alternative mode of transportation for commuting to work and short trips. Regardless of the perceived "danger out there," bicycling can increase the quality of life. And, who knows? The next bicyclist you see on the roadway may be the next Pennsylvanian to bring pride and attention to this Commonwealth. So, share the road and let Pennsylvania bicyclists share the limelight.

Ed note Joe Stafford is the Executive Director of the Bicycle Access Council and lives in Dallastown. For more information about bicycling issues in Pennsylvania or to obtain a copy of the Pennsylvania Bicycle Driver's Manual (Pub 380) email: info@BicycleAccess-PA.org or call (717) 417-1299.