

# Spokes

## Newsletter of Bike to the Sea

**Working for Bike Safety and Safe Places to Ride**  
Promoting the development of *The Northern Strand Community Trail*  
A bicycle and pedestrian trail through the communities of  
Everett - Malden - Revere - Saugus - Lynn

[www.biketothesea.com](http://www.biketothesea.com)

May/June 2006

**B2C President: Howard Stranger**

**Board members: Naomi Brave, Ginny Daly, Gus Fish, Janet Green, Clay Larsen, Joe LeDonne, Gail Palladino, Sharon Santillo, Eden Smith, William Stephen, Gerry Teichman, Helen Weitz, Steve Winslow, Angela Zimmerman**



## MA Federal Highway Office Policy Latest Hurdle to Trail Development

By Steve Winslow

The Massachusetts Federal Highway Office policy of withholding funds to trails on rail beds that are "rail banked" is the latest hurdle to trail development that the Bike to the Sea Inc is working to overcome. "After working to resolve issues between the MBTA and local communities we now need to focus attention on the aberrant policy of the MA Federal Highway Office", said Stephen Winslow, who has been working on resolving the legal issues for trail development.

Railbanking is a procedure that allows a rail right-of-way to be developed into a trail with the proviso that a railroad could restore rail service in the future. The economic reality is that only a handful of the thousand plus rail trails that have ever been reclaimed by railroads.

Craig Della Penna of Northeast Greenway solutions noted that "the Federal office in this state is a renegade. [Congressman] Olver's staff and Olver himself met with them 2 weeks ago and were snowed by them." Della Penna provided information that 13 other Federal Highway offices had approved federal funding on rail banked corridors.

\*\*\*Please support the efforts to overcome this roadblock by writing a letter to Federal Highway to reverse this policy\*\*\*

We have enclosed a draft letter with this newsletter for your convenience. Please copy it and mail it to all 3 representatives.



## Educational Exchange Trip to Holland

By Gerard Teichman

Last year, towards the end of May, I visited the ROC's *Secteur Educatie* in the former Saint Canisius College, a Jesuit school in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. For almost three weeks, the school welcomed me into their community of post-secondary students, many who were new immigrants from around the world. An unusual situation happened: My host, Wim Van Den Munkhoff, became hospitalized shortly after I arrived, and therefore I was left up to myself and many caring and understanding colleagues to complete my part of the program. Ann, Ans, and Edwold and Pieter invited me into their homes, went out on the town, (the poetry slam in the youth center was fun!), and they included me in two faculty events. One was a bike excursion from Nijmegen to the local countryside, and the other a country walk beginning at a small village assessable by commuter train.

Since I had extra time, I made an informal study of how the public works department did such a good job handling the large volume of cyclists typical of many Dutch cities. The following are a few highlights of those features with my own commentary about what worked for me as a cyclist. My thanks to Wim who gave me permission to use his bike, so long as I visited him, bringing with me my impressions from an American perspective.



areas reserved for bikes. If you look carefully in this shot taken at the Nijmegen train station, you can see the extent that

people use their bikes to commute. One problem that I encountered was everyone rides a "Dutch-bike" that look pretty much the same, and I had trouble a few times identifying mine. Even the saddlebags are often the same color, and all bikes have the same generator powered-front and back lighting systems. In the next couple of pictures, you can see how the city streets accommodate bikes, making the streets much safer to ride on.



In this shot, on the left is the main street that has fast moving traffic. On the right is the entrance and exit to one of the larger shopping plazas just outside downtown (If you look closely, you can see the "Golden Arches" of McDonalds). The two riders in front have children on rear child carriers, and the woman riding two abreast is carrying a shopping bag from her handlebars. Key safety features in this intersection are the traffic signals for bikes and pedestrians, and the clear and substantial road markings sectioning off you can see rows of white triangles on the road just outside the crosswalk markings. These markings tell drivers that the cyclists and pedestrians have the right of way. The different pavement surfaces also help to signal motorists that they are crossing a restricted area. I should note that the Dutch drivers are also bike savvy themselves, and usually allow room for two riders to ride side by side, a common situation, and are generally tolerant of bikes taking up some of the road to avoid car doors and other hazards. I took the following photo at main the

intersection right before entering the downtown area.



At this intersection we see once again combined bike and pedestrian signals, changes in road surfaces, and a left turn lane. Once you move into the left lane you have another set of light that signal when to cross.



Looking to the left across the main street you can see how the bike lane is kept separated from the road all the way across, and enters the next interchange without having to mix with traffic. Notice how road surfaces, landscaping and monuments work together in a visually pleasing way. Not only is the road well designed for traffic, it incorporates important safety feature for pedestrians and cyclists.

Of course to really understand Holland you have to ride into the surrounding countryside and villages. On one of my solo excursions, I participated in the *Landelijke Fietsdag* or the National Day of Cycling and received a silver award for completing the local

regional route through Battenburg. On the way back I passed through a hamlet with just a farm and a quaint church, Kerk Te Leur in Leur, built in the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c.



In closing, I feel gratitude for being able to make this trip, for having the chance to meet educators from another country and to participate in their daily and seasonal routines. I will also miss Wim. He succumbed to his ill health this year. Yet while I knew him, he always expressed interest in the American way of life, and he was also an informed citizen of the politics of his country; he made sure to vote in the national referendum regarding Netherlands's approval of the new EU constitution. He had many Turkish friends, and translated several books of poems by the Turkish poet, Nazim Hikmet.





## A Day in Lynn, By Clay Larsen

Sitting in a coffee shop on a Saturday morning a short while ago, I was contemplating the ambitious list of goals that Bike to the Sea laid out at our strategic planning seminar this past March. I had just worked a long week and was tired and a little ambivalent. I was feeling like just sitting in the coffee shop and chatting with friends all morning. More realistically I was thinking of all the stuff I needed to do at home: laundry, innumerable carpentry and home repair projects, bills to pay, cut the grass etc. etc. I was feeling like I just did not have the time or energy to take on any more responsibilities.

Gerry Teichman fellow Bike to the Sea board member and I had made plans to head up to Saugus and Lynn for the afternoon. Our plan was to first go to Marsh View Park on Boston Ave and put up some flyers announcing the upcoming REI grant clean up of the future path, then head to Lynn. Of the five towns the path will travel through, Lynn has the lowest membership representation. We wanted to find a way to boost membership. We hoped to find some sympathetic businesses, local nonprofits or just talk to people on the street and find out if they had heard of the path and what they thought of it.

At Marsh View Park we poked our heads into a few stores. First we went into a convince store right next to the path and spoke to a young man working the register. He had not heard of the path idea and assured us that he would give the literature we handed him to the owner. As we left the convenience store I wondered how many more bottles of soda and ice cream sandwiches they would be selling when the path comes through. We then walked across the street to the Boston Street Café. They were very busy with the lunch rush but they where friendly and said we could leave some flyers in the lobby. I can imagine a hungry cyclist stopping there after a long ride for a beer and cheeseburger in the near future. After putting up a few more flyers we hopped back in the car and headed on up to Lynn.

We drove along Boston Ave. for a bit then cut down some side streets to see if we

could find the right of way. Pulling over in a number of spots we peered down the path and where pleasantly surprised to see that for the most part the path was clear of weeds and not too much trash and debris. I was actually starting to wonder what we would be cleaning up at the clean up! I then thought how bad is that? The Lynn part of the right of way seems to be in pretty good shape!

In Lynn a portion of the bike path will run on city streets because the train track is still used in this area. I'd like to see it follow south Common Street along the beautiful Victorian area park and past the frog pond. The path could then travel down Central Ave to the heart of Lynn Center before crossing over to the beach. I am not sure of the official route but this seems like a good option to me! Gerry and I drove along a little further and found a parking spot in Lynn's Central square area right by the commuter rail station. We found our selves across the street from the Lynn Historical Society, a great museum featuring displays of historic photographs and information about Lynn's Victorian era and industrial past.

Downtown Lynn is an old city with narrow streets and a lot of charm. It was quiet but we felt safe and we could see solid signs of urban renewal. A classic old dinner had fresh paint and a great terrace with tables and umbrellas. We came across a new hip café called Gulu Gulu It serves lunch and coffee during the day and has live music, wine, and beer at night; the cafe also has free wireless internet service. Walking up Union Street we found a lively Hispanic area with great food and shops.

Another stop on our tour was at Zimmans, a fabric and furniture store that has been a landmark in downtown Lynn for almost 100 years. It is an old family run business with a huge inventory of great fabrics. Michel Zimman is an old acquaintance of mine. It was good to see him again and to know that he and his business are doing well. He laughed as he tried to imagine cyclist carrying bolts of fabric on their shoulders as they bike through Lynn.

As we returned to our car we came across a newly renovated building on Exchange Street. This is the home of Lynn Arts. Lynn Arts is a nonprofit arts foundation. It features a group of art studios upstairs with a large gallery on the first floor. We spoke with the Coordinator of Programs Steve Negrón. He was very enthusiastic about the bike path idea. He also brought to our attention a number of upcoming cultural events. Similar to Boston's South end, Lynn has Third Thursdays. Every third Thursday of the month throughout the year various Lynn businesses and cultural venues put on events and open house to attract new visitors and encourage people to

enjoy Lynn's downtown. There is also a festival in Lynn on August 5th called "Meet Me Down Town" that sounds quite interesting. The membership committee will try and get a table at the next one.

Well, instead of sitting in a coffee shop all morning I went and had an adventure with Gerry. We meet some new people and found out a lot about Lynn. I think the effort to increase membership in Lynn is off to a good start. We brain stormed and came up with a number of good ideas for ways to promote the path. So much for getting anything done around the house! That will happen next weekend. Maybe!

### Lynn Points of Interest

Gula Gula Café	56 Central Street Lynn	617-848-5967
Lynn Arts	25 Exchange Street	781-598-5244
Zimman's Fabrics	80 Market Street	781-598-9432
Lynn Museum and Historical Society	590 Washington Street	781-581-6200

Northern Strand Community Trail  
REI Grant Clean-up  
Rescheduled due to rain to:

Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 am Marsh View Park,  
Saugus-Lynn line

Enter a Raffle to win a \$300 REI gift certificate,  
good towards a bike, or whatever.

Raffle drawing on June 11, Bike to the Sea Day.  
Tickets \$5, can be purchased on B2C Day, or by  
sending a check to membership address on back  
of newsletter



### Committee Reports

These committees are made up of Bike to the Sea members and all are welcome to attend. Committees meet monthly. Please join a committee and help build the trail! Sign up on the B2C website newsgroup to get notifications of meeting dates or contact the committee chair.

#### Executive Committee

Howard Stranger-President 781-397-6830

Joe LeDonne: Vice President, Eden Garhart-Smith: Treasurer, Janet Green: Secretary

On 3/12/06 the Executive Board met at the Oak Grove community center with Betsy Goodrich of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The purpose of the meeting was to educate all board members as to the basics of building Bike Trails and to examine what progress B2C has made to date. The schedule 4-hour meeting turned into 6 hours when Betsy's excellent presentation fielded many in

depth questions from the board. The Strategy Session that followed lunch was the major area of Concern for the board members. Much soul searching was done by each member to exam the positives and negatives of the organization over the past thirteen years.

If I had to boil all the excellent suggestions down to one word that would be "SUPPORT" from the membership to the government, each level is vital if we are to succeed in the construction of the N. Strand Rail Trail. In future mailings we will be looking for volunteers (retire persons welcome) to organize city core groups, who can in turn organize trail users, business, cultural and school groups within their communities to support the visions of Bike to the Sea. Anyone interested in jump-starting the trail

volunteer drive can contact me (Joe) at 978 536-7422, or jdl102@earthlink.net

*Finance and Fundraising Committee*

Eden Garhart-Smith-chair 781-397-0433  
Gus Fish, Joe LeDonne, Gerry Teichman

The main concerns of the finance committee have been our request for bike helmets from a federal agency. It doesn't look like we can plan for a specific event until we have helmets in hand. We have ongoing discussions about new sponsors. Square One Mall owners replied to our inquiry by saying that they don't make donations, but do provide space for booths during a non-profit day. We decided that the owners of Malden Commons (?) deserve a place on our T-shirts. Further ongoing concerns are deciding which website features might be desirable if we switch to a professional website management company; foundation support and corporate support from companies that have an environmental focus, such as Ben and Jerry's and Patagonia.

*Membership and Public Outreach Committee*

Clay Larsen-chair 781-321-4680  
Naomi Brave, Gail Palladino, Sharon Santillo, Terry Savage, Bill Stephen

The membership committee has been trying to increase our membership base, focusing on the towns of Lynn, Saugus and Revere, who have the least members of the towns on the trail. Our focus is to get more brochures out there in these towns, and to set up our B2C booth at more local events.

*Government Outreach Committee*

Howard Stranger-chair 781-397-6830  
Steve Winslow

The Outreach Committee has also managed to increase awareness with the public and our elected officials. Bike to the Sea is starting a letter writing campaign (see lead article) to try and persuade elected officials to support the building of the path.

**" I thought of that ( the theory of relativity) while riding my bike" Albert Einstein**



## Networking Notes

Mass Bike [www.massbike.org](http://www.massbike.org)  
Northshore Cyclists [www.nscyc.org](http://www.nscyc.org)  
Winthrop Greenway [www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.org/greenway](http://www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.org/greenway)  
Friends of the Community Paths [www.pathfriends.org](http://www.pathfriends.org)  
Malden Rotary Club [www.rotary7930.org](http://www.rotary7930.org)  
Mystic River Watershed Association [www.mysticriver.org](http://www.mysticriver.org)  
Friends of the Everett Waterfront  
Saugus River Watershed Council [www.saugusriver.org](http://www.saugusriver.org)  
Friends of the Middlesex Fells [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org)  
Friends of the Lynn Woods [www.flw.org](http://www.flw.org)  
Saugus Action Volunteers for the Environment [www.saugus.org/SAVE/](http://www.saugus.org/SAVE/)  
Friends of Breakheart Reservation [www.saugus.org/FOBR/](http://www.saugus.org/FOBR/)  
Rails to Trails <http://www.railtrails.org/>  
Livable Streets <http://www.livablestreets.info>  
JRA Cycles, Medford: <http://www.jracycles.com/>  
Landry's Cycles, Danvers: <http://www.landrys.com/index.html>  
North Shore Cycle, Lynn: <http://nscycles.com/index.cfm>  
Paramount Cycle, Somerville: <http://www.paramountbicycle.com/home.html>  
Ace Wheelworks, Somerville: <http://www.wheelworks.com/>  
Park Street Cycle, Somerville: <http://www.parksales.com/>  
Broadway Bicycle School, Cambridge: <http://broadwaybicycleschool.com/>  
City Cycle Incorporated, Stoneham (781) 438-0358



## Upcoming Events

**Saturday May 20:** Nashua River Trail ride, leave at 10:00 a.m. from Pine Banks Park

**Saturday, May 20:** Somerville Historic Bicycle Ride, meet at Somerville City Hall at 10:00 am.

**Saturday May 20:** Breakheart Environmental Expo 9:00-2:00 at Breakheart Reservation. Come see what local environmental groups are doing in our surrounding communities. There will be displays, demonstrations, food music and it's all free.

**June 1-4:** The Congress for New Urbanism, an organization dedicated to building livable, bike-able cities, is hosting its annual gathering in Providence RI. For more info: <http://www.cnu.org/index.cfm>

**Sunday June 4:** Marshall's ride. Come pre-ride the B2C day route and help plan for the big yearly ride Meet at 10:00 a.m. at The Dockside Restaurant in Malden.

**Sunday June 11: Bike to the Sea Day.** Our 14<sup>th</sup> annual ride along the route of the future Northern Strand Community Trail. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Dockside Restaurant in Malden.  
**\$5 raffle drawing for \$300 REI gift certificate**

**Saturday June 17: Rescheduled due to rain:** Northern Strand Community Trail Cleanup. Meet at 10:00 a.m. Marsh View Park on the Saugus-Lynn line. Clean up sponsored by R.E.I and in conjunction with Saugus River Watershed association

**August 12-13:** Mass Red Ribbon Ride for AIDS. For more information: <http://www.bostonpedicab.com>

**August 19:** Revere Beach Festival, Revere Beach, MA

**BIKE TO THE SEA**

83 Jacob Street  
Malden, MA 02148



Address Sticker Here

Please give this to a friend or neighbor who might want to:

**Join Bike to the Sea and Help support The Northern Strand Community Trail**

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$15)

\_\_\_\_\_ Supporting (\$50)  
(receive a gift bike map)

\_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$20)

\_\_\_\_\_ Contributing (\$75)  
(receive a gift t-shirt)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make Checks payable to:

Bike to the Sea  
c/o Eden Garhart-Smith  
44 Greystone Road  
Malden, MA 02148

