

NORTH BALTIMORE BIKE BRIGADE

Cycling in all parts of Charm City!

[CYCLOVIA.](#)

10.28.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Events](#), [General Cycling](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [bikes](#), [biking](#), [cycling](#), [sunday street](#), [cyclovia](#) | by [Nate](#) | [16 comments](#)



Now we're getting somewhere! Baltimore had its first (?) Cyclovia event last Sunday on Roland Avenue between Northern Parkway and Cold Spring Lane. The southbound roadway was closed to vehicular traffic, but open to cyclists, pedestrians, families, dogwalkers, skateboarders and anyone else who wanted to use the road without a motor.

The road closed at 8am, but few ventured out that early. The bewildered passers-by would ask what was happening and were amazed at the answer. "Really? We can just walk down the middle of the street?" As the sun climbed, so did participation. By 9:30, the "traffic" was evident. While most were riding bikes, more families emerged with strollers, bike trailers, scooters, tricycles and wagons. Plenty of sidewalk chalk was on-hand and was well used.

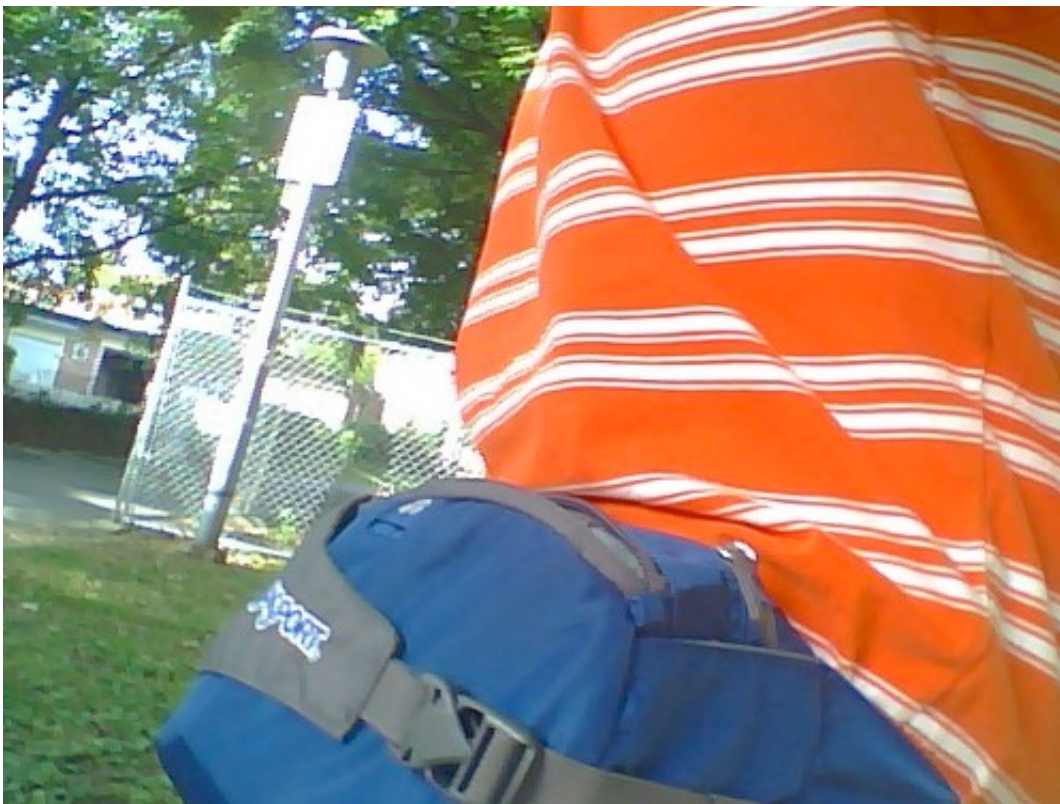
One goal of all Cyclovias worldwide is to enhance the sense of community. This goal was achieved early on and blossomed as the event continued. Neighbors who hadn't seen each other in years were catching up, of all places, in the middle of Roland Avenue.

Not only did the residents come out, but so did their ideas. I repeatedly heard requests to build a cycletrack on Roland Avenue. A cycletrack is a bi-directional bikeway separated from travel lanes by a barrier or buffer zone. This concept was well received by Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke, who was instrumental in making this event possible. The Roland Park Cyclovia would not have been possible without the vision and leadership from Phil Spevak and Mike McQuestion from the Roland Park Civic League.

Now that Baltimore proved it can do a Cyclovia, let's get some more going on!

[With a nod to Mr. Rantwick.](#)

10.28.09 in [Fred Forever](#), [Gear](#) | Tags: [bags](#), [Baltimore](#), [bikes](#), [cargo](#), [cycling](#), [fanny pack](#), [fred](#), [jansport](#), [rantwick](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [3 comments](#)



A [terrible cell phone] picture of me with my sweet fanny pack. [Read about former Baltimore resident Rantwick's fanny pack.](#) You know, it beat a messenger bag for not sliding all over the place or hurting my shoulder or both. And it beat a backpack for not making me sweat. I caught a lot of guff for it, though, which I think is funny. It smelled like campfire for a while, but it's largely gone away. I used it to carry my camera (etc.) to Sunday Streets this weekend, on foot. Now *that* makes me a geek, probably. I'm too tired to wax philosophical about this blue nylon tonight.

[Sup, Weekend.](#)

10.27.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Events](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [cycling](#), [fall](#), [autumn](#), [alleycat](#), [critical mass](#), [october](#), [halloween](#), [alley cat](#) | by [travelxlight](#) | [6 comments](#)



Just a quick reminder: this Halloween weekend involves not one but two bike good times. Friday, meet up at 7 o'clock (eveningtime) at the Washington Monument for a Critical Mass ride. Last year took about an hour and a half, didn't involve hills, and didn't involve anything *that* dangerous and/or antagonistic. The more people that ride, the better it works. Also: wear a costume.

Saturday is the [Black Cat Alleycat](#), which (I'm pretty sure) is the first alleycat Baltimore's had since last year's Shop Gentei race. Well, Shop Gentei's all into motorcycles now or something, and it didn't look like it was going to happen again this year until a couple of weeks ago when a flier started circulating on the internet and some dude started hitting up shops for sponsorships. Details are pretty scarce, but a [post](#) over at cyclocity.com says to expect it to be "SHORT," adding "Expect it to be free! I don't expect much more than that." Meet up at 6 p.m. at the Convention Center (presumably in the front). Costume mandatory.

[Photo by Abby]

[Keep riding!](#)

10.26.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Weather](#) | Tags: [commuting](#), [liam quigley](#), [MICA](#), [snow](#), [winter](#) | by [ratherbebiking](#) | [8 comments](#)

Today, it's cold. Cold by October standards. If today was a day in March, things would be different. But when I rode over to Service Photo on Falls Road to pick up film today, I seriously regretted leaving my pants in New York when I was there last. I slightly over compensated by putting on a fleece vest over my rain jacket. And rubbed some embrocation on the legs which actually worked pretty well. Actual pants would have been ideal. And to top it off, we are in for one very [snowy](#) and cold Baltimore Winter.



Days to look forward to

Anyway, I look at these few weeks as a good way to gauge which commuters you won't be seeing for the next 4 months. The short distance commuters at MICA and Hopkins seem to thin out and retreat to the warmth of the school shuttles. The racks at MICA are half full, which is a plus, but also lonely.

Sometimes it's downright depressing with so many empty racks, I even start to miss the backwards locked, space hogging [cargo bikes](#) and fixed gears with inexplicable hand-knitted top tube warmers. [Seriously](#). – But enough about that. Point is, this time of year, commutes downtown seem even more desolate. The Hopkins ride listserv slows down just as I need to start doing more base miles, and as I ride north on Charles or Guilford, I see less and less little blinky lights shimmering off in the distance.

We can look forward to awesome snow rides though.

[[Liam](#) lives in Oakenshawe, and studies photography at MICA, with a minor in complaining about the way people lock their bikes.]

[Gwynns Falls: It's Probably Nothing, But...](#)

10.25.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Safety](#), [The Man](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [biking](#), [cycling](#), [gwynns falls](#), [trail](#) | by [travelxlight](#) | [15 comments](#)



This [story](#) showed up last Saturday, and kinda details what those of us that ride Gwynns Falls on a regular basis already know: the cops are gone. And, as it turns out, the trail naturalist and the other dedicated trail administrator are also being cut. So, instead of the 5, 7, or 8 cops (depending on who you ask) assigned to the trail (not at the same time, of course) there are two, which the city feels is justified because of the low rate of crime on the trail (when there were 5, 7, or 8 cops working). And trail maintenance will be kept up to current standards by regular Parks and Rec workers and inmates, according to a tepid, not-really-reassuring [rebuttal](#) to the *Sun* story by Parks and Rec administrator Wanda S. Durden. (I don't know how the rash of kid gangs jumping bikers at the CSX bridge and Edmondson Ave. overpass figures into that. Nate Evans assures me the incidents are in his database.)

Maybe my getting ruffled here is an overreaction. The City promises to keep the trail safe and clean, right? But, honestly, the city was just barely keeping up on those things anyhow, and it's hard to imagine a stretched Parks and Rec is going to somehow unstretch itself for a new assignment. I suppose the thing to do is pay close attention to what happens next, and if things start sinking anymore, raise a holy hell. That said, we should probably raise a holy hell anyhow: Gwynns Falls is an amazing thing to have right in the guts of a major city, and one of my own favorite places to go around here. The parallel dimension of crumbling road and thick woods between Windsor Mill Road and Dickeyville on the reclaimed Wetheredsville Road shouldn't have a right to exist in Baltimore, but amazingly does. In DC, it'd be "rustic" townhouses.

Unfortunately, it strikes as one of those cynical budget cuts (timed for fall/winter) that out-of-touch administrators think won't get noticed. And if it does get noticed, will look to most people like a trim of something that was wasteful anyhow. Which pushes me (us?) into the asshole argument of saying we should cut something else to save our pretty lil trail, and people less realistic than me into arguing that if Gwynns Falls goes downhill, people won't want to move to Baltimore anymore for its stunning wildlands. So, maybe I don't want to be that guy or any of those guys because, honestly, we're getting close to siding with yuppies here. So, the point is, toughen up, get Kevlar tires and a tazer. Or write a letter to the powers that be.

[Dirty, Dirty winter coming.](#)

10.23.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Fred Forever](#), [Gear](#), [General Cycling](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [bicycle](#), [bicycles](#), [bicycling](#), [bicyclist](#), [bicyclists](#), [bike](#), [commuting](#), [cycling](#), [fenders](#), [Gear](#), [maintenance](#), [rain](#), [sheldon brown](#), [Weather](#), [winter](#) | by [Dan-o](#) | [1 comment](#)



dirty chain stay

I usually try to keep my ride pretty clean. I've been a little lazy about it lately, and it really needs a good bath. This got me thinking. My dad has always said, "Before winter sets in you should put a good coat of wax on you car." One of his points being is that it helps keep the salt off the car's finish in the winter months. This does make sense to me. So I'm thinking of cleaning up the old horse and putting a coat of wax on the seat/chain stays, down tube and fork. Can anyone think of a good reason not to do this? Also with winter on the horizon does anyone have any cold weather riding tips you would like to share with the cycling community? One I use, I got from [Sheldon Brown](#). Use clear tape to block off a few air vents on your helmet. It's a easy and very inexpensive way to help keep your head a little warmer and not compromise the fit of your brain bucket.

[Goodbye, University Parkway Video.](#)

10.22.09 in [Baltimore](#), [General Cycling](#), [Safety](#), [The Man](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [bike lanes](#), [bike routes](#), [bikes](#), [biking](#), [cycling](#), [roland avenue](#), [sharrow](#), [University Parkway](#), [video](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [2 comments](#)

As I recall, the bike lanes on University Parkway right below Roland Avenue, heading South, were the first ones in the City — or, at least, the first ones I ever saw. It was early fall 2007, and I was stoked. This was the sharrow right before the official bike lane, the first modern Baltimore sharrow I ever saw. I was sad to see it go today, so Dan and I got a little video of it.

I am extremely excited to see what replaces what's gone, though. Parts of the bike lanes here have always been a little rough, and lately, [they've been downright dangerous](#). Nate Evans [told us](#) there'd be smooth lanes soon, and he wasn't fooling. I repeat that I am excited to see what's next.

Roland Avenue is torn up between University and Coldspring Lane, too, so be careful. Those parts were always full of craters anyway. I'm glad that the City is maintaining the bike lanes a lot of folks use. I read an article somewhere wherein someone complained that the University Parkway and Roland Avenue lanes were for "Roland Parkers". In my experience, not so. Lots of people pass through, from the county, and heading to the county. And, living in Roland Park, I see lots of \$5,000 bikes ridden by folks wearing \$200 outfits around here sometimes. But, brother, they ain't goin to work. This route benefits more than Roland Parkers, that's for sure. Hell, I know some people who don't like the lanes being here.

[STAY AWAY FROM ROLAND AVE AND UNIVERSITY PKWY!](#)

10.22.09 in [General Cycling](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [roland avenue](#), [University Parkway](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



They are being resurfaced, i.e., only kinda half exist now. Dan and I scored a lot of photos and a video, which we'll get up later.

But you might wanna take another route home today and to work tomorrow!

[Tour du Port photos: Kali Durga.](#)

10.21.09 in [Baltimore, Events](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [bicycling](#), [bikes](#), [biking](#), [cycling](#), [kali durga](#), [tour du port](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [3 comments](#)

These are great photos of the ride two weeks ago, courtesy of [Kali Durga](#) (used with permission), with Kali's captions.



One of the coolest dudes on the ride.



Tour du Port hits Federal Hill.



View from the rest stop at North Point State Park.



The line for free Chipotle tacos at the end of the ride.

Thanks, [Kali](#)!

[Green Community Forum at UB.](#)

10.19.09 in [Baltimore, Events](#) | Tags: [Green](#), [johnny](#), [ub](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [3 comments](#)



[UBGreen](#) is hosting a community forum at the University of Baltimore on Tuesday, if you're free at 12:30pm on your lunch hour. NBBB member/co-founder [Johnny](#) will speak briefly about alternative

transportation at a commuter university, as UB eyes becoming a carbon neutral campus. ([More info.](#))

[On recognizing people in helmets.](#)

10.13.09 in [Fred Forever](#), [Gear](#), [General Cycling](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [biking](#), [cycling](#), [cyclists](#), [helmets](#), [people](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [20 comments](#)



I was standing at the bus stop yesterday, on my way home from work, and I saw a gent on a bike that I've seen a million times. And yesterday, I realized that we'd met at least twice and chatted. But, in the midst of traffic and far-away-ness (I'm near-sighted), I have missed the connection between these "two" people and their being the same person until exactly yesterday. And then I felt like a jerk for never saying, "Hi!"

I think helmets have a lot to do with recognizing someone on/off his or her bike. I certainly do not want to start a fight wherein everyone calls everyone else a Nazi for how they feel about helmets. I always wear one, but I've also had more than my share of non-cycling head injuries, and my helmet saved my brain in April when I crashed on my head/face. Anyway, helmets seem (to me at least) to throw off the recognition we have of folks. People's heads are shaped differently, and there's no hair to see. The straps even change the shape of a person's face. And sometimes one's usual motion/posture are shifted a bit by wearing a helmet and leaning over a bike.

Certainly, I've recognized folks by their bikes, and some people I see so often, I can't miss them. But if I meet a cyclist (like the gent I see most days) who's not holding his or her bike and not wearing her or his helmet, I totally wonder she or he gives me a funny look when I see them riding. Maybe I'm just dense. I do rely on recognizing walking styles (etc.) to recognize people from afar. Maybe I should use helmet types? I mean, I've been recognized by my orange helmet a few times in my short ownership of it.

Am I the only one who has trouble identifying folks in helmets and in traffic?

[PEACEWORKER RIDE 2009!](#)

10.07.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Events](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [bikes](#), [biking](#), [cycling](#), [cyclists](#), [gwynns falls](#), [history](#), [peaceworker](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [2 comments](#)



BIKE THE GWYNNS FALLS TRAIL WITH RPCV AND LOCAL HISTORIAN ED ORSER!

Join Peaceworkers, Peaceworker Alums, and local Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for this opportunity to bike the Gwynns Fall Trail with local community historian (and RPCV) Ed Orser. Ed will lead the group on an approximately 10 mile loop, and plan stops along the way to share his insights and knowledge of the trail. He is the author of *The Gwynns Falls Trail*. Our ride will start at the I-70 Park and Ride. We'll return to our starting point at approximately 2:00.

Sunday, October 11th

11:00 – 2:00

Meet at the I-70 Park and Ride. Please bring a sack lunch and water. Friends and Family welcome to join the ride...

NEED MORE INFO? WANT TO SIGN UP?

Call or email Jennifer at 410-455-6313 or jarndt@umbc.edu
or Joby at 410-455-6398 or joby.taylor@umbc.edu

NEED A BIKE?

LIGHT STREET CYCLES HAS HYBRID BIKES AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL FOR \$25 WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A STUDENT DISCOUNT. RENTAL BIKES ARE LIMITED, SO CALL EARLY TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION. THEIR NUMBER IS (410)685-2234.

[Friends of the Watertower.](#)

10.05.09 in [Baltimore](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [history](#), [watertower](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



Not quite cycling related, but there are efforts under way to save the Watertower. [Read more here](#).
Previous Watertower coverage [here](#).
(Photo, [Johnny](#).)

[Tour du Port and TAKE THE LANE!](#)

10.02.09 in [Baltimore](#), [Events](#), [Safety](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [cycling](#), [jehovelo](#), [one less car](#), [st. paul street](#), [tour du port](#), [University Parkway](#) | by [Johnny](#) | [13 comments](#)



In case you have missed it somehow, [One Less Car](#)'s annual [Tour du Port](#) takes place this Sunday, all over Baltimore's lovely waterfront. The forecast for Sunday is GORE GEE US. If folks who go would like to share pictures/stories, please email us (northbaltimorebikebrigadeATyahooDOTcom) to have them featured with credit and glory on this site. ElRo and I were going as a couple, but she's not feeling up to cycling with "morning" sickness and a tiny person in there.

Also, a reminder for this weekend, when folks will be cycling all over Baltimore even more than usual: TAKE THE LANE WHEN YOU HAVE TO!! I was on the MTA bus yesterday, and I saw a guy who was obviously new to cycling, and he turned onto a busy street to the right of the right-turn lane, *with* traffic. When the bus stopped for a second, and I couldn't see him, I thought the worst. If there's ever a situation to take the lane, it's turning right in a right-turn lane! (and turning left, and some downtown streets, etc.) For the love of **JEHOVELO**, take the lane! You're a vehicle!

Also, useful info for those headed to TDP by bike from the North: St. Paul Street is getting resurfaced and is gridded and scary right now. It's been too crater-rific lately to cycle on for the last few years, so this will be a great thing when it's finished — and they are making pretty speedy progress. But this weekend, watch out. Also, University Parkway is still full of holes near the bus pads and has the bike lanes closed for much of the length. Heading South between Roland Avenue and 40th Street, there's only one lane. TAKE IT!

Best wished to all Tour du Porters!

[A helmet mounted map display? From Japan, of course...](#)

09.29.09 in [Gear](#), [General Cycling](#) | Tags: [Baltimore](#), [cycling](#), [iphone](#) | by [cralls](#) | [5 comments](#)

The future is here! [Brief article on Wired's Gadget Lab Blog.](#)

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