

## A better commute: Look forward, not backward

Friday, May. 16, 2008

### TODAY

is Bike-Walk to Work Day. And the forecast calls for rain. Which pretty much proves the superiority of the automobile right there.

Biking or walking to work is grand, but largely impractical. Zoning and the general desire to live in nice neighborhoods with real yards and little traffic have separated homes and workplaces by enough distance to discourage travel by foot or bike. And then there's the weather to deal with.

Every town and city in the country is paved with roads and not bike paths for good reason. Ever try to carry groceries home on your bike?

Maybe one day people will travel by four-wheeled Segways that can hold the kids, the dry cleaning and the Chinese takeout. But they are never going to give up their cars for bicycles. Environmental activists who keep promoting this agenda are wasting their time. The alternative to the automobile is going to be found in the future, not the past.

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Mike - now bike riders are closet communists? hahahahaha. Boy, what an intelligert statement that is.

Think about this: maybe if you rode a bike, you would be healthier, and not such a drain on the health care system? Try to be forward thinking, not backward thinking

- **Art, Portsmouth**

"Let's keep up the good work and someday there will be more bicycles and less cars.", says Robert.

You mean like China, in the Communist days? Now that people are becoming more prosperous under rising capitalism, more and more people have CARS.

Sorry. I'll keep my car, thanks. I work hard, I can afford the comfort of climate control and personal space. Especially for a long commute, which is necessary because, often, the place "close to work" is either completely out of anyone's price range (Boston), or a bad industrial area.

- **Mike R., Bedford**

Economics has caused mass migration in our country in the past and will likely do so in the future. At some

point it will become cost prohibitive to commute so far and people will start working closer to home or will move closer to their job, whichever is more important to them.

- **DM, Hampton**

My first thought was this proves that the Union Leader Editorial board must not have grown up in NH. At least not the NH I grew up in, where there is no such thing as bad weather, just poor judgment in what you decide to wear. I thought NH valued people who could figure out solutions to problems and valued people for tenacity in pursuit of these solutions. The NH way I knew did not value a surrender to the easiest way and the path of least of resistance.

Biking may not be the easiest way to transport yourself, but in many cases it is probably the best way to transport yourself (especially since the majority of car trips are less than 5 miles--a distance that can often be made on a bike). Biking has a lot to offer, but the editors are correct only in one statement, it may not be the easiest way.

But the easiest way is rarely the best way, and using it as evidence to support an argument is faulty logic.

I just hauled home my groceries using a bike trailer (mind blowing, I know). It was a great experience and it gives me more options for using my bicycle, gives me some exercise, and gives me more money in my pocket. I win!

- **Brent, Durham**

If you have travelled to Europe, the city transportation system is largely composed of bicycles. Sure, cars are still the mainstream but as bicycle riding becomes more popular, our bike racks will hopefully outnumber our parking meters!!

- **Debra Chase, Rye, NH**

Union Leader CaveMan thinking strikes again! All this day does is to encourage people to try something different, on a voluntary basis. Something that would be good for you and for the environment at the same time. Maybe if people like it, they will do it again once in a while. Since the word environment is attached, the UL reflexivly lashes-out.

For some reason, this editorial reminds of one from a few years ago where the UL lashed out against encouraging voluntary conservation and bicycle riding because it was a throwback to "the horse and buggy days." Instead, the UL promoted the ultimate in government command and control - moving the earth farther from the sun. I kid you not! I'd like to see you do that voluntarily and without huge spending.

- **Jon, Bow**

If I could ride my bike to work I would. Just because I don't doesn't mean it a bad idea. The people on the editorial board here are messed up in the head.

- **Tim, Manchester**

With \$4 gas, I'll walk or ride my bike. So will my kids. And we all are healthier for it, placing less demands on our expensive health care system, which even penny-pinching editorial writers payfor. And bad weather? It might help the editorial writers to get wet once in a while.

**- Eric Williams, Concord**

I think it's ridiculous to assume that the goal was to completely eliminate cars in one simple movement. I would guess that the real goal was simply to get people to realize that a bicycle (or other) can be a reasonable alternative, when circumstances permit. But maybe we shouldn't expect somebody with "take-out chinese" on the fore-front of their mind to be receptive to any form of exhertive transportation.

**- Jesse, Concord**

Lessening dependence on private transportation is important. Too bad the city government in Manchester is threatening to cut 47% of the existing public transportation.

**- John, Manchester**

The editorial fails to give the pertinent information on its basis. Europe has shown that even with a history of bicycling and mass transport that the main form of transport is personal motorized (83% of all kilometers travelled). The more rural and poorly zoned U.S. would need to spend billions just to reach that level.

**- John Edward Mercier, Belmont**

As usual, the UL makes some good points but misses, or purposely confuses, the big picture. Nobody is saying lets all ride bikes or horses to work. The idea is to encourage riding a bike when its practical, rather than forgetting the bike altogether. When people choose to ride a bike the environment is better off, there's less demand for oil, and less pressure to build and repair roads. Is the benefit relatively small? Yes, but the editorial pokes fun at bike advocates, without suggesting an alternative other than "looking to the future instead of the past." Sometimes Joe & Drew are insightful and clever, sometimes pigheaded and stupid. This time its the latter.

**- John, Concord**

I can not truely agree with that statement. Bicycles now can have baskets attached to the rear sides and even a trailer for the young ones can be connected. As far as weather goes, there is always the public transportation system in citys' when it is not feaseable to use your bike. Walking promotes good health and exercise. Biking provides the same in a shorter amount of time. The future is now, many city's are working on bike trails as Manchester is. Let's keep up the good work and someday there will be more bicycles and less cars.

**- Robert M Tarr, Manchester**

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