

Stay Current with the Sensible Campaign Website

Thanks to People Power members Jack Nelson and Peter Scott, RTC meeting summaries are now posted on the Campaign for Sensible Transportation's new and improved website: www.sensibletransportation.org.

ADDITIONAL ITEM FROM THE LAST RTC MEETING: Besides the Business Council news (see page 1), the Ecology Action Board also wrote to say that it is not prepared to support the ballot measure. While the RTC commissioners appear troubled by measure's prospects, most of the RTC members who support highway widening appear determined to push a ballot measure forward—even if its success is unlikely. ■

People Power members can receive discounts from the following business members:

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People Power! UPDATE is published by People Power. Our goal is to educate people and politicians about the advantages of a transportation system less dependent on the automobile. A special thanks to all our volunteers.

PEOPLE O²O POWER! UPDATE

Celebrate Award-Winning Cycling in Santa Cruz!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF US!!!

Amanda Eichstaedt, president of the League of American Bicyclists, will be in town January 22nd, to present a silver medal award to the City of Santa Cruz. According to the League, we are one of the 20 best cities in which to ride in the United States! (Only two that are better: Davis and Palo Alto.)

It took 16 years of People Power to get here, as well as a dedicated Public Works Department and a caring City Council. Now it's time for us all to get together and celebrate OUR SUCCESS! The festivities will begin with speeches and refreshments at 6PM at the Civic Auditorium (stop by for a bicycle-powered smoothie!), and will continue with the award presentation starting at 7:15PM in the City Council Chambers. See you there! ■



BICYCLE AWARD CEREMONY

Come celebrate the City of Santa Cruz's designation as a League of American Bicyclists **SILVER LEVEL BICYCLE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008

- 6:00-7:00 PM Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, ABC Room (307 Church Street)**
- 7:15-7:30PM Santa Cruz City Council Chambers (809 Center Street)**

The Myths of Biofuels with David Fridley – January 24th

– Michael Levy, LSGP

Americans eat up our body weight in petroleum once each week, as a result of our strange proclivity for driving everywhere—a third of all car trips in the U.S., for example, are under three miles. Nonetheless, pointing out the obvious idea that we need to largely stop driving and flying in order to address global warming and a whole host of other problems is a sure way to become unpopular, fast. It seems easier for most people to consider a change of technology—even at some financial cost—than a change of lifestyle.

During the past year I've had conversations with friends—many of them environmentalists—who enthusiastically respond with the promise of cars running on hydrogen, electricity, compressed air, and of course, biofuels in forms such as used restaurant fry oil, biodiesel, and ethanol. I haven't won points by explaining that none of these technologies are likely to rescue our climate the way that getting out of our cars would.

continued on page 3

Business Council Backs Out

– Selina Rodriguez, People Power High School Intern

In a surprise move, the Santa Cruz Business Council (an organization comprising about 60 large employers in Santa Cruz County) voted at its January 2nd meeting NOT to support a sales tax measure to widen Highway 1. (The draft measure that came out of the Transportation Funding Task Force called for a half-cent sales tax over a period of 35 years, with more than \$300,000 earmarked for highway widening.) The Business Council spokesman said that they didn't think the tax measure would pass, due to local economics and "mounting resistance." (Kudos to People Power and the Campaign for Sensible Transportation—among others—who stood their ground.)

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) has estimated that promoting a ballot measure would cost at least \$500,000. The Business Council was expected to pay the majority of the cost, as they have been the loudest voice calling for highway widening. With the Council pulling out and the Transportation Commission legally prohibited from running a campaign, the question now is whether or not anyone else will step forward to take the lead. In spite of this setback, the RTC continued, at their January 10th meeting, to discuss how they would apportion funds, with highway widening still being their highest priority.

These events validate the strategy of People Power and the Campaign for Sensible Transportation. Both groups remain committed to opposing further attempts to widen Highway 1, while presenting a sensible transportation vision for Santa Cruz County. (See back page for more information.) ■

INTERVIEW**John Leopold: Candidate for Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

The following excerpts are from a recent interview by Judy Lukasiewicz with People Power member John Leopold.

John Leopold is running for a seat on the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. He is running for the First Supervisorial District position, which is currently held by Jan Beautz. This district includes Live Oak, Soquel, Branciforte, and a wide area of the Santa Cruz Mountains from Highway 17 to Nisene Marks, including the Summit. The county elections will be held in March of 2008.

Q: What inspired you to join People Power?

A: I like to ride. As my children got older, they showed an interest in riding as well. It was at that point, riding the streets with my kids, that I realized the importance of safe streets and accessible pathways for bike traffic as a method of transportation.

Q: Do you support widening Highway 17?

A: I haven't seen a plan that I could support and highway widening is not at the top of my list for how to improve transportation issues in Santa Cruz County. Even though highways have received the majority of funding. We need a balanced plan that includes bike/pedestrian paths and bridges, improved bus service, and a train/trail system.

Q: Do you support a train and trail along the coast?

A: Yes. In the Live Oak/Soquel area, for example, a coastal rail/trail could help to make the streets less congested. It would make it safer for kids and other commuters to travel by bike. Overall, a train/trail would be a welcome improvement as well as a sensible, alternative form of transportation, and it could be accomplished by leveraging available resources.

Q: If you win the Supervisor position, will you commute to the county building without using a car?

A: Yes, I've thought about that seriously. It would, of course, depend on my work hours, but I would hope to commute by bike at least two times per week, as I have done in the past. It's about a three-mile trip, one way, from where I live.

Q: How can People Power members help with your campaign?

A: Get the Santa Cruz County voters out in March...hold coffee gatherings in your homes to discuss local campaigns and increase voter interest. Walk door-to-door in your precinct and let others know that you support my campaign for office. Talk to your neighbors. Give contributions to my campaign. Go to my website to learn more: friendsofjohnleopold.com. ■

**Bike Traffic Safety School Begins**

The first class of the Santa Cruz Bicycle Traffic Safety School opens on January 24th after years of work by the Traffic Safety Coalition with support from People Power and Traffic Judge Kim Baskett. This means that if you get a ticket on your bicycle you now have the option to attend a 2-3 hour class on safe cycling, with a charge of \$35, instead of paying a fine of \$100 or more.

The classes will be taught by qualified cyclists in our community. To sign up, go to your arraignment and tell Judge Baskett you want to take the class. You can also take this excellent class without getting a ticket by calling the Traffic Safety Coalition at **454-4312**.

This is not an option for car drivers, who still have to pay their full fines if they go to traffic school. Santa Cruz is one of the first places in the country to have this program. Congratulations to all of us and a big thank you to Judge Baskett and the Traffic Safety Coalition. ■

Mission Corridor Safety Campaign

So far, the City Council has cooperated admirably with People Power and other bicycle advocates in attempts to get a safer corridor along Mission Street on the city's Westside, but we are still a long way from seeing any changes on the ground.

On King Street, where People Power has asked for a bike boulevard or bike lanes to be installed (in that order of preference), the Council has allocated money towards drawing up plans for both. The bike lane plan will be drawn up by the Public Works Department while plans for a bike boulevard will be drawn up by noted bicycle planner John Ciccarelli. The boulevard was strongly supported by the city's Transportation Commission. It was also mentioned favorably during a city council meeting regarding new lights to be installed at Mission and Miramar as part of the Safeway expansion.

With regard to Mission Street, the City (with the cooperation and support of the Public Works Department) voted in favor of all of our recommendations, including our critical request for signs reminding car drivers that "cyclists allowed full use of right lane." The problem is that Mission is a Caltrans right of way, and the Caltrans response has been downright insulting. They refuse to admit that there is a safety problem, citing "a 50% reduction in collisions since 2003," and then suggest that cycling in the lane on Mission could "increase danger by encouraging cyclists to ride in the lane," even though a variety of organizations, including the local Traffic Safety Coalition, think this is the safest place to ride. Their assertion also contradicts the city police department, who blamed the late John Myslin for riding to the right of the truck that killed him. The take-home message from Caltrans is: we don't want to think about how bicycles can ride Mission Street safely, despite the fact that there are three bike shops and other bike-friendly destinations on this street.

People Power is considering sponsoring mass rides on Mission in protest of a California Transportation Agency that doesn't want to recognize our existence. Please contact Micah with your thoughts or desire to participate: **425-0665**. ■

News Flash!! Working with neighbors who live near Holy Cross Church, People Power members have removed an illegally installed fence that was blocking a public path near the church. The path is a prescriptive easement that has been used by people in the neighborhood for more than 80 years. For background information about the situation, please see the *Update* issue #54 (Spring/Summer 2007).

Contact Micah at **425-0665** to get involved.

State Senate Bill 375

— Celia Scott

Potential landmark legislation to implement the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB32, signed into law in 2006) is pending in the California Legislature Assembly Appropriations Committee, following passage by the Senate in 2007.

SB375, introduced by Sen. Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), is a significant effort to integrate land use planning and transportation to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Initially supported by the California League of Conservation Voters and the Natural Resources Defense Council, the bill has won support of the Planning and Conservation League, American Lung Association, and numerous other environmental and public interest groups. It has also predictably been opposed by the League of California Cities, groups representing contractors, developers, and a variety of other business and local government interests. **Recently the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission voted to instruct its staff to work toward exempting any possible transportation tax measure placed before the County voters in November 2008 from the provisions of SB375.**

According to the legislation's author, "current planning models used for transportation decisions and air quality planning must be improved to assess policy choices...(by) encouraging more compact development patterns, expanding transit service, creating walkable communities, and providing incentives. It is also necessary to achieve significant greenhouse gas reductions from changed land use patterns and improved transportation to meet AB32 standards."

SB375 requires the State Air Resources Board to provide by January 1, 2009, regional greenhouse gas reduction targets from automobiles and light trucks for 2020 and 2035, with regional updates until 2050. Also, some regional planning and transportation agencies would be required to prepare a "sustainable communities strategy" to achieve the targets through alternative development patterns or additional transportation measures. Other provisions would affect the environmental review process for specified projects.

SB375 is lengthy and complex legislation, and has already been significantly amended in the Senate. It is certain to spark strong debate as it proceeds in the Assembly. Some observers have called it the top environmental priority for the coming legislative session, as a critical component of the state's effort to reduce global warming. As of this writing, no hearing dates have been set for SB375.

For more information and updates, call John Laird's office at **(831) 425-1503**, or visit www.leginfo.ca.gov. ■



Realtor Terry Cavanagh is one of People Power's newest business members. He is pictured here in front of Micah's family's new home on Riverside Avenue. That Micah and his family actually own a home now in Santa Cruz is nothing short of miraculous, and Terry was a crucial part of that miracle. Micah and Akiko found their house after switching realtors and working with Terry. If you are a People Power member who buys a house through Terry, he will pay for your home inspection. You can contact Terry at **(831) 345-2053**.

Introducing New People Power Business Member—Emily's Bakery



Next time you get a hankering for a pumpkin muffin and some tea, think about visiting Emily's bakery (on Mission and Laurel). The bakery is owned by Emily Reilly, but you may not see her there because she has devoted more and more of her time to local politics of late, and that is good news for the bicycle community.

On the Santa Cruz City Council, Emily has consistently voted with the bicycle community on many important projects—from approving the Broadway-Brommer bridge to Bicycle Traffic Safety School. Lately, Emily has been our hero on the Council in defending the Holy Cross path—a situation that is evolving even as you read this. On the Regional Transportation Commission, Emily has been one of only a few commissioners to vote against widening Highway 1 and the sales tax measure to fund it. Emily's has also donated baked goods to many People Power events.

With her Council term coming to an end, Emily is running for State Assembly. While it's too early for People Power's endorsements on that race, we can definitely recommend Emily's apple pie, cakes, and variety of muffins. Ride your bike to Emily's and get a free sliver of her awesome apple cake with any purchase! ■

Two Losses for Santa Cruz's Cycling Community

GREG MONTOYO, a Bike Church mechanic and frequent volunteer at People Power, died of cancer in September. Greg was an inspiration of courage and integrity who participated in many campaigns and actions.

MARILYN DREAMPEACE, wife of Shalom Compost, was another member who succumbed to cancer recently. Marilyn was a dedicated environmentalist and artist.

Our deepest condolences to Greg and Marilyn's families and friends.

Call for Volunteers!

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Help earn money for People Power and spread our message throughout the county.

With the growing success of our Bicycle Valet Parking program we are in need of volunteers to help set up and park at upcoming events, including:

January 22nd: Award Ceremony
Santa Cruz City Civic Auditorium

January 24th: David Fridley talk
Louden Nelson Community Center

Call 425-0665 to sign up for a shift.

Petition Denied!

— Charlie Dixon

The lawsuit to block the Arana Gulch Plan which includes the Broadway-Brommer Bike Bridge was denied by Justice Paul Burdick on November 9th. The petitioners against the plan were the Native Plant Society and Friends of Arana Gulch, a neighborhood group. The Santa Cruz Group of the Sierra Club, listed on the Friends of Arana Gulch website as one of the "Organizations Who Oppose the Broadway-Brommer Bike Road," supported the petition to block the bike bridge.

Originally filing the petition in August of 2006, arguments included discussion of the tar plant, as well as minutiae concerning an alternate plan and the City Council's obligation to follow the recommendations of their staff. On all counts Burdick gave complete and convincing arguments explaining why the arguments were invalid and why the petition should be therefore denied.

Although Burdick ruled against the petitioners, the process of getting the bike path has been delayed for up to 15 months through an appeal filed with the California 6th District Appellate Court on January 9th by the same two groups. According to the Santa Cruz City Attorney's office, the appeal cannot be thrown out because at this level there is a right of appeal. This part of the legal process will probably take another 6–15 months.

If it's worth having, it's worth waiting for. Are there any Sierra Club members out there who think that the Club's anti-bike bridge position should be changed to favor the bike bridge or at least be neutral? Do you know somebody in the Sierra Club who favors the bike bridge? If so please call me, Charlie Dixon, at **426-3689**. I am a Sierra Club member and want the Sierra Club to change its position to neutral. ■

The Myths of Biofuels *continued from page 1*

Biofuels seem to be a particularly alluring proposal as a solution to the problems associated with fossil fuels. It seems "eco" to recycle restaurant grease, and it's appealing to think that the carbon dioxide generated by burning biofuel will be absorbed by the next crop of corn or switchgrass. In fact, you can do some good this way. San Francisco, for example, has embarked on an ambitious program to run its city vehicles partially on recycled restaurant grease, which otherwise clogs the city's sewers. This is a nice thing. But it's a tiny thing—and it should stay that way. Biofuels are simply no match for the immense quantity of fossil fuel energy we consume. Each year we use up about 4,000 years of prehistoric plant growth in the form of fossil fuels. Put another way, according to one estimate, we in the U.S. use more fossil fuel energy than the amount of solar energy captured by every growing plant over our entire land area.

The U.S. government and E.U. are working against this problem of scale and embarking upon programs of massive biofuel reliance. This is ultimately not a solution, and scale is only one of many problems with large-scale biofuel production. Among other issues is the humanitarian disaster that production of biofuels is already creating. Growing large amounts of corn, soybeans, and canola for fuel has already driven the price of these and other food crops through the roof. This past year, corn prices have increased by 50%, while wheat has doubled, in part because land is being used for fuel production instead of food. This hits poor countries hard. The situation is serious enough for Jean Ziegler, U.N. rapporteur on food issues, to call biofuel production a "crime against humanity," and call for a five-year moratorium.

There are also significant ecological drawbacks of trying to fill our voracious appetite for fuel by growing plants. For example, to fill the European demand for biodiesel, Indonesia has cleared millions of hectares of forest to plant oil palm. The resulting emissions from exposed peat soils and burned trees have earned Indonesia the distinction of being the third-largest greenhouse-gas-emitting nation in the world.

There are many more interesting facts to learn about biofuels. With wanton disregard for our social standing, members of People Power's Local Solutions Committee are hosting a talk on the **Myths of Biofuels**, with David Fridley, energy researcher from Lawrence Berkeley Labs. Beyond pointing out what won't work, the evening promises to point us in a positive direction, as Micah and Joe Jordan follow up with a discussion of a realistic plan for local energy independence. We hope to see you there. ■

THE MYTHS of BIOFUELS

a talk with David Fridley



DAVID FRIDLEY, research scientist at Lawrence Berkeley Labs, will address facts and hype about biofuels:

- Can biofuels solve the climate crisis?
- Is ethanol production good or bad for the environment?
- What's a sustainable energy future and what role do biofuels play in it?

Thursday, January 24, 7:00 PM
Louden Nelson Center, Room 3
free/donation requested

David Fridley's presentation will be followed by
"A Local Plan for Energy Independence"
with transportation activist Micah Posner
and NASA researcher Joe Jordan.

For more information, call 425-0665
or visit www.peoplepowersc.org

SPONSORED BY Local Solutions to Global Problems, People Power, and the Santa Cruz Sentinel

San Lorenzo River Bike Bridge Solution

A crucial bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the San Lorenzo River next to the freeway is still headed for construction next summer, despite the lowest bid for the project coming in \$2 million over budget—at \$4.3 million. Instead of scrapping the project, the Public Works Assistant Director, Chris Schneider, worked with People Power and the city's San Lorenzo River Committee to supplant the original design with a pre-fab version that can be built within budget. The last-minute switch required flexibility and humility on Chris's part, as well as a huge amount of goodwill on the part of the River Committee, who backed the inevitable, despite having put hundreds of hours into the original design and interpretation for the span. While no one is happy with such a large mistake, or to see so many hours of work go down the drain, we can all take pride in the community's ability to put aside blame and disappointment in order to move forward. The long-awaited bridge will allow pedestrians and cyclists access from one side of the river levee to the other. A link from the west end of the bridge under the freeway to Harvey West at the new Tannery complex is in the initial design stage. ■

IMAGINE ECOTOPIA!

Reclaiming the Commons for People

— Ellen Farmer

On Saturday, November 3rd, as part of the national Step It Up! Rally for Climate Change Solutions, Santa Cruzians showed our true spirit with the closing off of a city block for several hours that afternoon.

Parking spaces for cars were converted into a park for people, with real sod, trees, and park benches, while hundreds of passers-by were treated to smoothies blended by bicycle power, chalk art drawings on the pavement, music, comedy, spoken word, and a youth-powered bicycle boom box.

Energy for all of the microphones was produced by a solar trailer from Independent Energy Systems and a gurgling solar-powered fountain provided more fun for kids. A huge calendar of upcoming environmental education events was displayed on the street along with a pledge, signed by the multitudes, telling local leaders to Step It Up! by promoting:

- Trains and Trails; Not Wider Highways
- Clean Energy Jobs
- Local Solar Rebates for Households
- Local Food Production

In the afternoon we paused for a group photo, displayed prominently on the Step It Up! website (www.stepitup2007.org), along with photos from hundreds of other communities throughout the country. The nationwide campaign was inspired by writer Bill McKibben (a passionate climate change activist for over 20 years). Our photo featured a huge graffiti-style banner painted by Cabrillo student Conor Carr. Mother Nature emphasized the urgency of our global warming message by providing 85-degree weather that day.



This parking space became a park.



Step It Up! Santa Cruz group photo.

The local Step It Up! event was organized by a coalition of groups including People Power and our Local Solutions to Global Problems committee, Collaborative Ventures, Ecology Action, the UCSC Student Environmental Center, Santa Cruz Community Credit Union, Eco-Design Resources, Bill's Wheels, the Green Resource Library, True Power, WomenRise, EarthVision Film Festival, Capitola Freight and Salvage, and others.

Thanks to the volunteers, musicians, valet-bike parkers (courtesy of People Power), photographers, and City of Santa Cruz staff members who lent a hand. Celebrating community oneness as we work to solve problems together feels so right. Who knows? Life could actually be getting better! ■

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AT THE BIKE CHURCH

All workshops are free, donations accepted.

Plan an Alleycat Bike Race

Saturday, January 19, 11AM-1PM

Part bike race, part scavenger hunt, alleycats are fun community events that test endurance and challenge knowledge of local geography. In this workshop we will begin plans for a future alleycat.

Intro to Bikes, Maintenance, and the Bike Church

Saturday, January 26, 11AM-1PM

Practical overview of bicycle mechanics. A useful introduction to our shop for newcomers.

Women/Transgender Bike Workshop

Contact: (541) 232-9747

1st and 3rd Sundays, 11AM-2PM (ongoing)

Bike maintenance has traditionally been overwhelmingly male-dominated. We help those who've been marginalized in this setting to become knowledgeable in working on bikes and riding. We provide safe space for women and gender minorities to work and learn skills. Taught by women/queer mechanics.

Soquel/Capitola Intersection

As we go to press, construction is finishing up on the new configuration of the intersection at Soquel and Capitola Avenues, thus COMPLETING the bike lanes on Soquel from Santa Cruz to Aptos!!! The new intersection will be much friendlier and safer for bicyclists.

The old swooping free right turn onto Capitola from Soquel will be open ONLY TO BIKES and a new turn lane for cars—closer to the traffic light—will slow automobile traffic going around that corner. ■



IN MEMORIAM

LUCIAN GREGG, 18 year-old cyclist and SFSU student, was killed on January 2nd while riding his bike in Santa Cruz.

In times like these, it is important to remember that the victim is not at fault. Sure, we can offer solutions to stop all cyclist deaths—one letter in the *Sentinel* recently advocated banning bikes from Santa Cruz streets. A delivery truck ultimately took Lucian's life, so why is the bicycle to blame?

Some people have cried out for brake laws regarding fixed gear bicycles. The loss of a friend is never easy to cope with, and it was not made any easier by the negative press surrounding the particular bicycle he was on. It is inappropriate to use this unfortunate loss as fodder for either side of the argument about the safety of fixed-gear bikes.

Lucian's family asks that, in his memory, we all make a contribution to a "green" cause and wishes that we keep riding our bicycles. Be safe out there.

— Tim Wesolowski

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Brown Berets Join Sensible Transportation Campaign

The Brown Berets, a youth organization based in Watsonville, have joined the Campaign for Sensible Transportation in an attempt to support more progressive transportation planning for the county.

Brown Beret spokesman Sandino Gomez explains, "Our constituency needs improved transportation options. When most transportation funding goes towards widening the freeway instead of rail or bus service, a lot of people who depend on transit suffer." Sandino expressed support for the Rail Trail, as well as for land use planning that "builds communities, not urban sprawl."

Teacher and Brown Berets member Jenn Laskin said, "We totally support anything that will pull transportation away from fossil fuels and the war machine. Especially cheap and healthy things like bike paths and sidewalks. People in Watsonville are economically oppressed by car culture. Any kind of public or alternative transportation is a great thing."

In the words of Watsonville City Council member Oscar Rios, "the Brown Berets have been one of the strongest youth organizations in this community and have led by example by providing our young people with constructive alternatives and the tools to make progressive change." People Power is very proud to be working in conjunction with the Berets and the Campaign. ■

Special thanks to our amazing and talented members whose long-time volunteer efforts help make People Power more powerful:

STEVE PIERCY for keeping the website up-to-date,
JUDY LUKASIEWICZ for her accounting skills,
RON GOODMAN for creating our new easy-to-use database, ED OBERWEISER and RICHARD SNOW for handling membership and other outreach tasks.