Cyclist pride raised as bicycles take their place in traffic

By RYAN HEBERT

Fredericton - The day is brightening on Officer's Square. A man on a bike crosses the street, his son driving a bicycle beside him. They look from the empty square to a man standing next to a bike tied to a parking meter. He wears glasses and a red helmet. His name is Matthew Hayes, and he is looking for cyclists as an instructor.

“They have left already,” The man asks. “I thought it was at five.”

“I thought so too,” Hayes says, scanning the park. “But there’s no one here yet, it must be a thirty.”

“Well, we don’t want to be late for swimming, do we son?”

“What should we do?” the child asks.

“Let’s start riding,” Hayes says smiling. They leave, and soon another cyclist stops by.

“Hello, I’m Jean Philppe. Is this Critical Mass?”

“It will be... We go in the middle, people, we see each other better.”

It is September 25. On the last Friday of every month cities around the world celebrate active transportation with a Critical Mass bike ride. Everyone has a different reason for being in it,” Hayes said. “For me, it’s about reclaiming the streets from cars. It’s a protest in that we’re taking on car culture, and disrupting the normalness of it, We’re traffic too.”

A Critical Mass rider counted 300 people. Today in Fredericton there were eleven taking part. The group’s small size didn’t stop participants asserting their right to the road. It is a protest initiated by the American group Critical Mass.

“I think it’s a great idea. People ride in the streets and have fun. And it’s mostly people taking snow off roads, because sometimes it’s dangerous.”

“People need to be checked on, like a car situation,” Hayes said. At some Critical Mass people have protested by lying down on the streets. Long time member Dave Steele said he would have to also make a protest bike for the cyclists killed here in Fredericton, and Toronto last month. “We take old junky bicycles, paint them up... when we see them there people know what happened.”

Hayes is a long time Critical Mass. He has seen groups of a thousand people in Toronto, where he is from.

“It is in a sense a protest against the lack of bicycle lanes, global climate change, and the complete inability for this city’s municipal government to plan for alternative modes of transport. It’s created a demand for the continuation of bicycle, however, and people like to ride together and feel empowered and emboldened by traveling with such a large group.”

“Let’s do this.” Let’s go” Hayes says to the rest of the group.

“Let’s get out there!”

The group went for traffic naturally. The group took the size of a very small. They walk at the stop sign, then drive on everyone ease.

By MARYLYNN CÔTE

Gallaudet University identifies “anyone who cannot understand speech (with or without hearing aids or devices) using sound alone (i.e. visual cues such as lipreading)” as Deaf. While those who have some level of hearing with hearing aids and other devices are referred to as ‘hard of hearing’ they are also called culturally Deaf. This means that they share the culture, community, language, and challenges of the Deaf community.

The Deaf community in NB is small but active. There are support groups such as the NB Royal Purple Elks Club Deaf Camp, Frederickon, and the Fredericton Association for the Deaf. There are also many activities for NB Deaf. The New Brunswick Deaf Network members gather for the International Day of Sign Languages Rights, a day to celebrate Deaf culture and bring awareness about accessibility and inclusion.

Hard of hearing student Jessica Davidson has faced challenges in school but has also received support. “Sometimes I need a phrase repeated or changed and people will refuse to repeat themselves multiple times.”

The idea for Deaf education can sometimes be frustrating as well, “one constant immigrant has always been (watching) English movies without subtitles.” One professor actually refused to put subtitles for the viewing of several documentaries throughout a course as it was “disturbing” to the other students.

It is this kind of ignorance and systemic autism (disorder) that can present a problem to many in the society. On the other hand, Davidson is satisfied with the support and services she receives to assist her in fighting those challenges. “I’ve been happy so far, I’m not so bad off for this disability.”

For Deaf students, learning in a typical classroom setting is difficult, but a slight adjustment to routine can facilitate learning. Children with hearing impairments have benefited from a shift to visual signing languages. In some cases a child will have a teacher, a hearing interpreter, and a Deaf interpreter to assist them. It is this kind of accommodation that can greatly improve the quality of education a child receives.

Employment is another challenge that Deaf individuals need to work through. The CAD reports that around 70% of Deaf Canadians are under-employed or unemployed. This is where the non-profit Fredericton Works comes in. The group provides employment counseling for the Deaf and assists employers in accommodating their employees needs.

All in all, the vibrant Deaf community in NB is making strides toward increasing services for the Deaf eliminating stigmatization, and educating the general public on Deaf issues.

Conference on social inequality examines perceptions of poverty

By EDEE KLEE

Frederick Theologian George Feenstra and Sociologist Mike Fleming recently hosted a public dialogue on poverty and social inequality at St. Thomas University. “It’s a dreadful thing to be poor because poverty is hard but because social reality defines poverty as failure, it is also a way of being defined as a failure. That’s why St. Thomas University, said Feenstra. As a minister in Vancouver’s east end, he witnessed the “air of disheartening removal of all the poor people, the crack addicts, the street sex-trade workers, the beggars, etc.” from that area. “I never understood the purpose of national Olympic Committee and subsequent aggressive drug enforcement,” he said.

“We think it’s normal that good people have good things so it seems to follow that people who don’t have good things must be bad people and have no power to move them out of view.”

“People need to be checked on, like a car situation,” Feenstra said. “It is not an abomination and that it goes on more often than not. “And it goes on systematically. That is to say there are processes and systems and things in place which make it almost impossible to escape from such poor treatment.”

Sociologist Mike Fleming agreed that the root of the problem is a structural one. He discussed the works of sociologists C. W. Right Mills and Patricia Hill Collins, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He also confronted by necessity abilities, our own lives. Paying the bills at the end of the week, getting the kids to school, working in a crowded office or in the street. Society. Mills calls for a way of bridging the gap between these two individual tramps and the broader social structure in the lives of people. “It’s this taking away of people, our own lives, recognizing that we’re not alone and that the other people are not alone. people need to be checked on, like a car situation, a structural problem.”

Fleming said it is a popular conception that oppression is something in which individuals are acting upon other individuals. “That we’ve solved our oppression problem. We have inequality of social status, which is a structural problem. We are in fact living in an oppressive society.”

Several audience members voiced their concern about feeling helpless in knowing how best to bring about change. Perhaps one of the reasons the cornerstone of the democratic society is the responsibility of each individual, and the need for involvement of the public domain is critical. “If the citizen abdicates and goes into a kind of passive-receptive mode where all they do is watch and wait for a better life, only a few who are reinforced and the citizen doesn’t learn how to think through things then our dilemma persists.”

Proceeds go to the Revolutionary Association of the Children of Latin America and Andrea Gibson’s poetry focuses on war, politics and gender norms. Hosted by Fredericton Peace Coalition, NB ReELLECS, Fredericton Friendship Group, UNB LGBT and GSA, Students’ Union, GSA, UNB Psychology Department, and UNB Women’s Network.

FAIR TRADE COFFEE HOUSE WITH GUATEMALAN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY

A fair trade coffee house with a Guatemalan Coffee farmers co-op and the Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network for music and food takes place Friday Nov. 16 at 7:00pm at 830 University Ave., at Renaissance College, 811 Charlotte St. Contact: info@fairtradecoffeeshop.com

FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY: CANADIAN WORKER CO-OP FEDERATION ANNUAL MEETING. Thursday, Nov. 29 from 9:00am to 5:00pm at the Canadian Worker Co-operative Development Centre. For the conference agenda or more information, visit www.canworkerco-op.org

CRITICAL MASS BIKE RIDE. Bike ride held on the last Friday of every month. In Fredericton, meet at Peoples’ Place to be on your way to the Mud House (Museum) and Queen. In Moncton, meet in front of City Hall. Ride leaves 5:30pm. UNEVON, UNBSJ

CINEMA POLITICA. Cinema Politica Fredericton screens their films for the evening on the first Thursday of every month. 220 University Ave., 180 St. John St. Films are free. Donations encouraged. Contact: fredericton@cinemapolitica.org. Visit www.cinemapolitica.org

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