

From the Clipboard

TAKEDOWNS AND PURSUITS

*By Officer Charles J. Hurley
Dayton Police Department (OH)*

All good cops enjoy a successful pursuit. Pursuits are especially fun when you catch the suspect without wearing yourself out or getting hurt. Mountain bikes are the ideal tool for cops who enjoy the thrill of the chase.

Fleeing vehicles can be one of the most enjoyable mountain bike pursuits mainly because cruiser-bound officers think you must be Superman to chase down a car with a bike. What we don't tell the cruiser jockeys is that

good tactics and fast thinking make these arrests possible, not superhuman powers. It's more fun to let them think we really are as fast as a speeding bullet.

Your best bet in any vehicle pursuit is to not let the suspect driver know you are after him until it's too late. The best way to do this is to shadow the vehicle with the bicycle. Shadowing means that you are deliberately hiding from the driver while you are following his vehicle.

Shadowing vehicles with the police mountain bike is
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3rd Annual Police On Bike Conference To be Held in Ft. Lauderdale

Broward County Sheriff's Department to Act Selected as Host

*By Scott Virden
Bel Air Police Department (MD)*

Greetings Fellow Road Warriors,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I'm Scott Virden, and I am heading the Planning Committee for your 3rd Annual Police on Bikes Conference. Other committee members are listed below:
Charles Hurley Dayton Police Department (OH)
Joseph Martin Hayward Police Department (CA)
Phil Ordano Broward Co. Sheriff's Office (FL)
Marco Tapia Boone Co. Sheriff's Dept. (MO)
Tom Woods Denton Police Department (TX)

Further, we are fortunate enough to have two L.A.W. staffers on the committee. They are Susan Jones and Denise Jones (no relation).

On July 14, the Planning Committee met via conference call and decided some of the basics for the conference. It will be held at the Sheraton Design Center Hotel in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and will be hosted by the Broward Co. Sheriff's Office. The date has been set for Thursday, April 29 through Saturday, May 1.

In an effort to disseminate this information as soon as possible, without waiting for the specific details of the conference, L.A.W. will be mailing out a conference announcement flyer to all agencies or individuals on their mailing list. Don't throw the flyer away. On the bottom there will be a form for you to complete and send back for further registration information.

This year's conference will consist of a split agenda similar to that of the 1st POB Conference. There will be nuts and bolts classes for agencies seeking to start a bike

patrol and more advanced topics for established units. Organized rides and hands-on technical training will also be included.

All in all, the 3rd Annual Police on Bikes Conference promises to be the best yet. If there are any of you out there who would like an opportunity to speak at the conference, please drop me a line with a rough explanation of your topic. Any and all reasonable suggestions will be reviewed by the Planning Committee. Send your proposals to Scott Virden at Bel Air Police Department, 39 Hickory Ave., Bel Air, MD 21014.

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IPMB NEWS

Official Newsletter of The International Police Mountain Bike Association

Teaching Cycling Effectively Isn't Kid Stuff

By Kirby Beck
Coon Rapids Police Department (MN)

It was the third time I had raised my hand to speak. The two times before the Instructor had cut me off as if what I had to say wasn't valid. Maybe this time would be different, I hoped. I knew I had some good information to share with the class, but why wouldn't he let me. He blew it off like it was a Senate filibuster. We were to listen to his lecture and that was that. Only later, when I learned he had been an elementary school teacher, did it make some sense. He was treating me the same as he treated his third-graders, and he probably didn't even know it.

Are your students being treated like children when you teach an Effective Cycling class? For many people their only exposure to education was during their K-12 years when education was "required." We were all exposed to teachers whose teaching methods were too many times designed for those students who really didn't have the motivation to learn and the desire to be in school. One could often sense that some teachers were merely "going through the motions" of education. Students were lectured at and talked down to and never were they asked their opinion. They were rarely challenged to perform. For many of us that was our only exposure to "teaching," so those are the teaching methods we tend to use and imitate. If, as an adult learner, you have ever been treated like a child by an instructor who didn't want to hear your ideas or reasoning, then you know you truly frustrating and detractive such education can be. You know how quickly motivation and interest in learning can be lost.

But adult learners pursuing continuing education, like those we most often see in our cycling classes, are very motivated to learn and to use the knowledge, attitudes, and skills we attempt to instill in our classes. We are extremely fortunate as instructors to have students who are so truly motivated to learn and improve! Like a coach training athletes to improve their physical skills and knowledge of the game, Effective Cycling Instructors (ECIs) must also help our students to learn the "game" and improve their cycling skills and overall performance. Looking at the techniques of coaches and experienced adult trainers can help us as instructors to improve our own performance in order to improve the performance of our students.

In my role as a Field Training Officer (FTO) for recruit police officers newly assigned to the street, I share many similarities with my role as an ECI. The students are highly motivated to learn and to succeed. They are in the program because they really want to be. The students bring with them a set of life experiences, values, and skills which will help them to learn and assimilate the

information and skills being presented. As an adult educator for these types of students the instructor's role is primarily that of a guide and mentor. People learn best through their mistakes, both past and present. An instructor of adults has to monitor the students' progress, assist them in learning from their mistakes and then guide them toward improvement. How that is done can greatly influence the students' continued improvement. Using the Coach-Pupil method of instruction together with comprehensive feedback and self-critique, the learning process can be maximized.

The Coach-Pupil Method of Instruction

The Coach-Pupil method of instruction for teaching new skills is a three part process of explanation, demonstration and performance. The explanation phase, usually conducted in lecture form, describes the skills to be covered and the reasons these skills are important. Describe the skill in a step-by-step manner asking the student open-ended questions to assess their understanding. Open-ended questions have to be answered in a narrative fashion and cannot be simply answered yes or no. Ask questions such as, "List the steps required in making a vehicular style left turn at an uncontrolled intersection." The answer will truly indicate the student's level of understanding. If you merely look at the students and say "Do you have any questions?", the students will often say nothing. Some won't speak because they fear looking foolish. Others may believe they do understand, but in fact they don't.

The second phase of instruction is the demonstration portion. As the name implies, the skill is demonstrated in a slow step-by-step manner. The skill of making a vehicular style left turn, for example, involves a number of smaller skills. Students must be able to scan to the rear while maintaining their line; they must make a proper evaluation of surrounding traffic; they must be able to signal their intention to other drivers; they must be able to steer into the proper lane and assume the correct roadway position; and lastly, they must be able to ride into the proper position on the new roadway. It may be necessary to teach each of these steps independently first and then build them into the completed maneuver.

The final phase is the performance phase where the students demonstrate their ability with their new skills. Monitor the students very closely to prevent the development of bad habits. The Law of Primacy tells us that we learn best what we learn first. Once bad habits are acquired they are difficult to replace. Make sure students learn the correct way from the beginning. Once they begin performing riding skills, whether in a controlled environment or on the road, instructor feedback is the primary way of assessing their performance. How that feedback is presented can either enhance

or diminish the motivation and performance of the student.

Guidelines for Feedback

As an FTO I have to constantly monitor and evaluate the performance of the recruit I am assigned. The goal, like that in a EC class, is to develop a student who can perform the skills properly, safely, and independently. Students will never develop independence if the instructor is constantly telling them what to do. They have to be able to make their own decisions and choices. Nor will they stay motivated if the instructor is incessantly telling them what they did wrong. Nobody wants to hear that all day. While it may be the easiest teaching style to use, it certainly isn't the most effective and worthwhile.

After watching the student perform for awhile, take a break and provide some feedback. Ask first "What did you do correctly or approximately correctly?" Remain silent and expressionless while listening to their response. Any response on your part, verbal or non-verbal, may very well shut down their sharing process. This first question points out correct performance and gives the student complete credit for it. They learn to achieve success.

Next, if you have been riding with them, and not merely watching from the sidelines, ask them "What would we do differently if we had the opportunity to do that again?" You are in fact,

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IPMBA News

Newletter of
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Bike Association (IPMBA) membership
please contact League headquarters.

IPMBA: An Organization of Action

by Allan Howard

I just returned from training bicycle patrol officers in Joliet, Illinois. In addition to the people from Joliet, there were also officers from Aurora, Plainfield, and Shorewood, Illinois in attendance. I'm sure these units will be an immediate success.

IPMBA News is proving itself as a worthwhile training aid, and the organization itself is gaining nationwide recognition due to the hard work of many people. Gary McLaughlin, editor of the newsletter, has asked all of you to send in articles, questions, and photos that pertain to bicycle patrols. I would like to echo his request because I feel that the road to success lies in international participation and collaboration.

We are still working toward a standardized method of training, preferably one that would be

underwritten by IPMBA. Having one training program worldwide would take the blinders off our face and allow us to see the total picture. The L.A.W.'s Effective Cycling program could be added to, and a new certification called the "Effective Police Cyclist" could be a reality in a short period of time.

One of the biggest problems that face new units is administrators who are stunned by the cost of a suitable bicycle for patrol. I believe a one or two page brochure from IPMBA briefly outlining the reasons why high-quality equipment is necessary would assist many administrators and new units. Other items that could be touched on in the brochure are: uniforms, training, successful ways to use bicycle patrols, advantages of sending officers to national training conferences, and overall cost effectiveness of bicycle patrols. Having a

brochure that we can mail out at little or no cost will bring a flood of inquiries from law enforcement agencies that were previously unsure of how to get started.

A lot of things have been talked about and suggested, and IPMBA has already proven itself as an organization of action. Your continued support will be rewarded with results that will benefit you as a police officer.

We'd like to start profiling bicycle patrols from all over the world, so take a couple of photos and send us an article describing your unit and its operation. This would be a great way to give yourself a little pat on the back and list some of your unit's successes.

Until next time, ride safe, be safe.

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letting the students critique themselves. The second question solicits negative feedback, and by its wording, the instructor accepts some of the criticism, too. This type of questioning and self-critique allows the student to explain why they did what they did and to come to their own realization that it was incorrect. It is much easier for students to accept negative feedback when they are saying it about themselves!

Next, repeat what you heard them say and what you saw them do that was correct and they might not have mentioned. This is called "parroting." It shows them that you agree with their assessment. It confirms their abilities, credits them with proper performance, and encourages them to act independently in the future.

Once their proper performance has been noted it is time to identify that which needs correcting. It is extremely easy to point out incorrect performance by saying something similar to, "You should have moved out farther away from that old red station wagon parked three blocks back. What if the driver had opened the car door suddenly?" Resist the temptation to critique in this manner. Instead, develop the ability to use the "flip-back" technique. Continue your questioning, "Do you recall passing an old red station wagon that was parked three blocks back? What should we be concerned about when passing parked cars? Can you think of a better way to approach that in the future?" By using a flip-back technique the instructor lets the student point out their own errors and offer solutions. Follow-up questions are intended to focus the student's thinking in a certain area and to prompt the desired response. Instructors experienced in using these parroting and flip-back techniques adhere to the 60:40 Rule.

The student talks 60 percent of the time and the instructor listens. The instructor talks 40 percent of the time and the student listens. In this way students are being treated as the free-thinking, responsible adults that they are.

Being a quality trainer of adults requires skills much different from those used to teach young children. When teaching young children their comments and ideas are often discouraged and ignored. While teaching adults, however, students' comments and ideas should be solicited and encouraged. Adult learners learn best when they

are allowed to use their new skills and perfect them. They also respond positively when their past experience is recognized and allowed to converge with their new skills and information, thus enabling them to form a more comprehensive view of their world and empowering them to direct their own educational experience. The Effective Cycling Instructor has the important role of helping the student achieve their own learning objectives and to guide them as they hone their basic skills into those of a skilled and competent cyclist.

Omaha Pedal for Police

by Denise Jones

This spring saw the launching of an experimental police bicycle patrol in Omaha, Nebraska. The new patrol will increase police effectiveness in protecting the people of Omaha while not costing taxpayers a cent. This is possible through the efforts of local bicycling enthusiasts who have helped fund the new enterprise.

Ron Mortensen and Paul Hill from the Omaha Pedalers Bicycle Club (OPBC) contacted police and offered to raise money to fund a bicycle unit. The offer was accepted and Mortensen and Hill incorporated a non-profit organization, Friends of Police on Bikes, with a goal of raising \$10,000 for the patrol.

On May 17, the OPBC and the Friends of Police on Bikes held a "Bike with the Police" ride. 240 participants pedaled and viewed the scenic delights of the city in the safe company of 12 police officers from the newly formed unit. Six

rides of varying distances and terrain were mapped out for the bicyclists, each offering "historical and picturesque interests." Proceeds of around \$1,500 from the event went to help buy bicycles and equipment for the patrol.

When asked if they were near to achieving their goal of \$10,000, Mortensen replied that with the combination of cash and equipment donations, they are very near it. He said that the police unit is now in possession of 15 fully-equipped bicycles used regularly by 12 officers patrolling 2 shifts. An additional 33 officers have been trained for the police bicycle unit.

Further financial help will be forthcoming through the efforts of city council members who plan to send out letters to major businesses in the area soliciting funds for the unit. Mortensen is hoping this project will raise \$6,000-\$7,000 more. He said that bicycle patrols are really catching hold of community interest and gaining in popularity — looks like they'll need every penny.

Rehoboth Beach Holds Police Mountain Bike Competition

By Denise Jones

Heads turned as police bike officers paraded through the streets of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, on their way to the police mountain bike competition held there on May 3rd.

The Rehoboth Beach Police Department (RBPd) hosted the event which drew police officers from five neighboring precincts. Approximately fifty spectators looked on as 16 riders competed on a large obstacle course designed to demonstrate the speed and skill of the bike officers.

The winners were calculated by group time scores. Dennis Sandusky, spokesperson for

RBPd, said that since the departments varied in the number of their participants, and everyone wanted to compete, the simplest solution was to compile individual time scores within the groups and average those to find the winning team. That way an extra rider wouldn't necessarily be an advantage, as he or she could affect the team's score either way.

Individual time scores were recognized, but no trophies were awarded in that category. Dover Police Department took the team trophy for the event, with Allen Camell holding the best score for an individual with a time of 1 minute 45 seconds.

Sandusky felt that the event would have been better attended by other agencies if it weren't for

concern over the verdict in the trial of those officers involved in the Rodney King beating. The rumors of possible outbreaks of violence in their precincts kept away two of the agencies that had planned to attend the competition.

The event was a success, according to Sandusky, because the pre-event parade and the high-profile publicity of the event were "effective announcements" to the townspeople of the new police bicycle unit in their area. Because the unit in Rehoboth Beach is relatively new, there were some problems with equipment at the event, and Sandusky stated that he will proceed very differently as he plans the competition scheduled for next year.

Takedowns From Page One

a very effective tactic. The vehicle has to travel on the street and try to negotiate traffic. The bicycle patrol officer can use sidewalks, alleys, empty lots, yards and fields to stay with a vehicle for a long way. He can maneuver through rush hour traffic and go places the vehicle's driver never expects. This way the bicycle patrol officer can choose when and where to make his approach while retaining the element of surprise.

If you've already been spotted and the vehicle flees, you have a much harder job ahead of you. You will have to use the same tactics and hope to get to him when he gets caught in traffic. Avoid riding in the street after him and instead try using side streets and sidewalks. Anticipate where he might go and try to get there before he does. If you see he is going to get caught at a red light, figure on him turning right on red. If you lose sight of him, try listening for a moment. Revving engines and squealing tires may give you an idea of where he is. In all cases be sure the violation committed is worth the effort.

We used practically all these tactics on a recent arrest. On 2/27/92 we chased a blazer that was supposed to have dope in it. A street crew had spotted it but was trapped in rush hour traffic and couldn't get to it. We were able to get through traffic and shadow it for several blocks until it stopped at a crack house. The driver got out with a fully loaded MAC-11, and the passenger had a sawed-off shotgun. We had the element of surprise and took them both before they could react. We got the guns, the dope, two good felony arrests, and a new blazer. The street crew got to transport the prisoners for us when they finally arrived.

The second kind of pursuit commonly encountered is the fleeing suspect. These can be a lot of fun, too. Generally suspects will either start to flee when they first see you or immediately after you dismount your bicycle. Often you are right on top of them before they realize you are there and start to run.

When suspects start to run, you need to go directly after them. Look ahead to anticipate obstacles. This is where training and practice come into play. The more you have trained on obstacle negotiation the better the odds of you staying in the pursuit. If they cross an obstacle you can't go around or across on your bike, dismount and finish the pursuit on foot. A long, high fence or a steep climb up a stair case is a good time to dump the bike. You still have an advantage in that the suspect has burned up more energy getting to the obstacle than you have.

The best pursuits are with a partner. One officer stays after the suspect and radios location and direction of flight. The second officer rides parallel to the pursuit and maneuvers to head off the suspect. The goal of the first officer is not to catch the suspect but to wear him out and herd him into the second officer. If the radio is busy try shouting instructions to the second officer. This usually works and often unnerves the suspect.

The takedown is what you do now that you've caught up to the suspect. The preferred method of takedown is when the suspect collapses from exhaustion. The next best takedown is when the suspect realizes he can't get away and just gives up. Unfortunately there are times you have to take down a running suspect. There are a lot of techniques that will supposedly allow you to do this. I've tried many of these takedown techniques taught to bicycle patrol officers, and the only one that works consistently is the rolling dismount.

To perform a rolling dismount:

1. Shift your weight to the left pedal
2. Bring your right leg over the back of the bike to the left side of the bike.
3. With your right foot trailing behind your left, slide your left foot off the pedal and onto the ground.
4. You will now find yourself running alongside the bike
5. Now you can twist the handlebars slightly to the right and let go if you want to get rid of the bike, or bounce back into the saddle if you need to

You are now on foot, reasonably fresh, and pursuing a tired suspect. Properly performed, the rolling dismount will give you a great deal of momentum and the ability to catch your suspect within a few steps. This dismount can be performed at any speed in a wide variety of circumstances. Use it at slow speeds every time you dismount to stay in practice, but don't dump the bike.

The advantage of the rolling dismount is that it is simple. No fancy flying bicycles, no need for perfect timing and technique. You just get off the bike and take down the suspect the way your department has trained you. The nice thing is that it works. The best thing is that it doesn't leave you at a disadvantage if it doesn't work perfectly.

I know there are several other, more dramatic techniques available. I can tell you from experience that you don't want to use any technique that has you still mounted when you touch the suspect. He will have much better balance and maneuverability than you do. Don't play into his advantages and let him knock you or pull you off the bike. Also, avoid techniques that require you to strike the suspect with the bicycle. This is liable to cost you a great deal of paperwork and again puts you into contact with the suspect while you are on the bike.

Now that you have arrested the suspect you must remain absolutely professional. You are a bicycle patrol officer and you are dependent on street crews for prisoner transportation. That means you can no longer make an arrest, stuff him in a car, and leave before anyone can protest. You are likely to be on the scene for quite awhile with the suspect, his family, and his friends until the transporting crew arrives. Keep things as cordial as possible. Until your bicycle patrol develops a reputation for criminal work you may find people who don't normally run or fight doing just that. They don't associate cops on bicycles with jail and they tend to see how much they can get away with. Be careful.

Training and Tactics

By Allan Howard
Dayton Police Department (OH)

One of the major problems that plague urban areas is thefts from autos. As police officers we know that many of these thefts can be prevented by locking valuables in the trunk or leaving them at home. In reality, most people use their cars as "showcases" for the average thief to do his daily shopping.

A piece of glass that is designed to shatter won't do much to protect valuables, although people seem to think it will. The fact of the matter is that stealing radios, radar detectors, briefcases, and purses from inside parked cars is usually more profitable than being a cop. Because people will never universally change, we must develop a strategy for dealing with this problem.

The bicycle is an excellent tool for the detection and apprehension of theft from auto suspects. It is highly mobile in urban settings, which gives it an advantage over patrol cars, and it is extremely quiet. Have you ever noticed that pedestrians commonly will not look before they cross the street? That's because they "look" for traffic with their ears. As they approach the street they listened for the sound of oncoming traffic, and if they don't hear any, they will cross the street without looking. Using a bicycle to track theft from auto suspects is akin to a deer hunter taking away a deer's sense of smell.

Now that we have the means to catch the thief, we must develop the method. First, determine through reported crime data where the thefts occur and what days and times are most prevalent. Concentrate your efforts on these areas as close to the times of the thefts as you can. Most thefts from autos occur in the morning hours between 6:30 and 11:00 a.m. There are several reasons for this. Thieves are usually slaves to drugs and/or alcohol, and they need to harvest their daily crop early to provide themselves with money to buy or trade for these things. Homeless individuals who resort to crime are in the same position. They must do their thefts in the morning before their hunger for food grows.

Another advantage for early morning thieves is that people are intent on getting to work and are preoccupied with their own thoughts. This makes an ordinary citizen a poor witness even if he or she does see the crime in progress. There are thieves who perpetrate their crimes in the afternoon, but primarily the morning hours are the most active.

When a thief looks for a likely area to ply his trade, he searches for areas that are naturally hidden from view: cheap, out of the way pay parking lots; free, on-street parking not directly adjacent to the business district; outskirt portions of mall parking lots; and parking garages. Finding a spot where you can use binoculars to observe these areas during peak times is usually easy to do. Keep in mind that unless you have enough bike patrol officers to act as an arrest team, you must

pick a location that will allow you to respond when the theft is observed.

Taking an early tour through your suspected hunting ground and locating cars that have valuable items laying inside will give you a good idea where to concentrate your observations. If I have two locations that are being hit, I will usually scout both locations and sit up on the one that has the most cars with valuables inside. Thieves enjoy the one-stop shopping approach and many times will do several cars in one area. This also reduces their chances of being caught.

Once a location has been scouted and an observation post is established, have the arrest team in place and keep their location concealed at all times. Have regular marked patrol units stay out of the area so they don't spook the thief. Be aware of possible escape routes that the thief may have arranged. You can rest assured that the thief has considered the possibility of being seen and has a route planned for his escape. Having the arrest team close to possible escape routes minimizes the chance of losing the suspect. In downtown areas, a favorite escape route usually includes running down the sidewalk of a one-way street against traffic so officers in patrol cars cannot follow.

Make the dispatcher and other crews on duty aware of your project so no one is in the dark. Nothing is more frustrating than having a crook get away because nobody knew you had an operation going.

Parking garages pose an observation problem because even in the daytime they are dark inside. Parking garages have two sets of ramps and parking levels, one set for entrance and one set for exit. It is possible to drive to the top of a parking garage and then drive back down without seeing the same cars you saw on the way up.

Morning parking garage thieves will concentrate their activities on the lower levels of the down ramp parking levels. This gives the thief an advantage because a patrol car must first drive the up ramps and levels before the officer can begin to observe the down ramps and levels. Long before an officer in a patrol car can see the thief in action,

they have been detected by the thief using counter surveillance and listening skills. Another advantage to this method is that people are only coming into the parking garage in the morning, and the chance of being detected by a citizen leaving is very slim.

Parking garage thieves will usually try to target cars near likely escape routes. Usually there are two sets of steps and one elevator. By using the steps on the opposite end of the garage, the thief reduces his chances of coming into contact with a witness.

Using a bike to ride parking garage ramps backwards is an effective way to catch thieves. They are normally concentrating their counter surveillance efforts on the up ramps and can be surprised by an officer quietly gliding up behind them on a bicycle. Again, making sure that possible escape routes have been covered will make losing the suspect a near impossibility.

Using arrest report data you can profile what your potential suspect might look like. Race and approximate age are good profile identifiers. Know who past offenders are and whether or not they are currently incarcerated. Having pictures of them will assist you in curtailing thefts.

Almost every theft from auto suspect will be using a bag with a shoulder strap to ply his trade, and a good thief will always walk against the traffic flow on one-way streets. This gives them an opportunity to disappear when the officer in the patrol car has to go around the block to get to them for interview purposes. A bicycle patrol officer has a distinct advantage in dealing with this kind of suspect because they can go anywhere a pedestrian can.

When making any arrest in the area, pay special attention when inventorying baggage carried by the arrestee. If there are tollable items like radio knobs, radio face plates, cassette tapes, and other items commonly taken in thefts from autos, tag the items as confiscated evidence. Take a photograph of the suspect and retain the pertinent information. Using common sense and a little tenacity, bagging a theft from auto suspect is easy for the bicycle patrol officer to do.

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Police Dept. _____

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(410) 539-3399

Broken Spokes

In the last issue we asked you the following question: To be an instructor for bike programs, should one be assigned to a bicycle unit? The following responses were received:

A: To be a firearms instructor does one have to be a member of a shooting team or does a defensive driving instructor have to be a member of a traffic unit? The answer is no. One should not discount expertise based on nonmembership in a particular unit. We can learn from people we have no contact with other than in training. The local bike shop may have a master mechanic willing to do a maintenance class or the officer back in Admin may be a World Class bicyclist who would jump at the chance to show the bike unit some riding techniques just to get out of the office. There is a lot of untapped talent waiting around for somebody to ask.

*Sgt. Ken Belden
San Fernando Police Department*

A: I believe there are many talented people in our communities who are capable of sharing their information with bike patrol members. ECIs, NORBA racers, nutritionists, bike mechanics and fitness experts are people who come to mind who would add immensely to a bike patrol training class. However, unless some law enforcement person, with experience in bicycle policing or bike patrol training is involved in the class, the class won't have the credibility it deserves. My experience as a police officer has shown me that my fellow officers don't accept the word of a civilian who has "never been there" as much as they do from a brother or sister officer. Sadly, they could say the same thing, but the cop's word will be given more weight. The presence of a "real

Uniform Needs of the Bike Mounted Cop

(part one)

*By Sgt. Joseph T. Martin
Hayward Police Department (CA)*

The "stealth fighter" of police work. That's what some have called the bicycle when operated by uniformed cops. Stories abound of suspects being taken completely by surprise when descended upon by bike cops. Such stories underscore the need for bicycle officers to be quickly and unquestionably identified as legitimate law enforcement officers. Yet clearly, 100 percent wool, dry-clean only uniforms worn by many agencies are obviously not well adapted to the physical demands of this mode of transportation. So called "tactical uniforms" also fall short of the bike patrol's need for functional clothing. Thus, appropriately balancing safety, comfort, and pro-

fessional appearance is the challenge faced by any agency putting its officers onto bikes. This article attempts to address most of the uniform questions faced by new bike units, and present some food for thought for those already in operation.

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The most obvious and necessary modification to the uniform is a bicycle helmet. No single piece of equipment is more likely to save a life or reduce injury. Crashing is not a mere possibility when riding thousands of miles each year. Crashing is an inevitable, albeit unpleasant experience which all bike officers will eventually experience. A helmet dramatically increases the chances the officer will walk (or perhaps ride) away from it. In a Seattle study done in 1989, only four of ninety-nine cyclists with serious brain injury were wearing helmets at the time of their injury. It is estimated that 85 percent of severe head injury to cyclists could be prevented by simply wearing a helmet. There are many good bicycle helmets on the market, in a wide variety of colors and styles. Choose one that compliments the uniform. (Keep in mind that dark colors will absorb heat.) Any helmet you choose should be certified by the American National Standard's Institute (ANSI) or the Snell Memorial Foundation. (Stickers inside the helmet will tell the helmet meets these standards.) Make sure it fits. The helmet should be worn with the bottom edge level, not way back on the head (a common fitting mistake). The straps should be snug enough to keep the helmet from moving around on the head. The "Y" formed by the straps should be just below the ears. Helmet covers, decals, and the like can help identify you as a law enforcement officer, can be procured locally, and are reasonably priced. Wearing a helmet marks you as a responsible rider, and sets a positive example for the general public.

*Kirby Beck
Coon Rapids Police Department*

Broken Spokes

In this article, I would like to suggest questions to keep you on your pedals. Please comment on the question, and I will publish the best responses.

Q: Should an officer use a baton or any other weapon while riding a bicycle?

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