IPMBA NEWS

Official Newsletter of The International Police Mountain Bike Association

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Bicycle Patrol in the Private Sector

by Gary Gallinot,
Santa Monica Police Department, California

Bicycle Patrol Units, fad or phenomenon? You be the judge.

Over the past several years, bicycle patrol units have been instituted in a variety of law enforcement agencies throughout the country. The civilian sectors, such as the Community Service and the Parking Enforcement Officers, have also recognized the benefit of bicycle patrols. We all knew that it wouldn't take long for the private sector to follow suit. Private patrols, shopping malls, and retail security are all jumping on the band wagon.

The question arises, why is there all this "hoopla" about bicycle programs? After all, bicycles have been around for years.

With the increasing emphasis on community policing, be it community-oriented police (COP), problem-oriented policing (POP), or service-oriented policing (SOP), the concepts are similar, whereby the police interact with the community, empowering its citizens to deal with issues that face their community. This becomes similar to the "old beat cop philosophy" in knowing the people in your area.

A bicycle detail is one way to accomplish this mission. It offers not only community interaction and visibility, but increased mobility and visibility. The private sector is dealing with many of the same issues that affect law enforcement. From a public relations (PR) standpoint, I think we all agree that bike units couldn't be any more successful. After all, everyone has ridden a bicycle at one time or another in their life - kids, adults, merchants, and yes, even the bad guys.

What about the administrative benefits? In light

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Policing L.A.'s Housing Projects By Mountain Bike

The City of Los Angeles Housing Authority has 21 Housing Projects or Developments within it's city limits. The majority of the developments are plagued by gangs, street narcotic sales and usage, strong arm and armed robberies, burglaries, auto thefts, and numerous other crimes against persons and property.

For years, combating this plague with traditional policing methods failed. In October, 1991, however, the Housing Authority Police Department had 10 officers and supervisors mountain bike equipped, trained, and sent into the field. Of these first officers, four were assigned to the Aliso Pico and Ramona Gardens Housing Developments in East Los Angeles. The other 4 were assigned to the Jordan Downs Housing Development in Watts.

The first few months showed great success for the bike officers and the program. Communities that had been totally out of control were brought in check by numerous arrests of gang members and narcotic dealers. In the Aliso Housing Development, in East Los Angeles, the Al Capone street gang had nearly its whole enrollment put in jail or prison, shutting down its street narcotic sales and denying its power over the community.

In the Jordan Downs Housing Development in Watts, a little different approach was taken. This development is controlled by the notorious Grape Street Crips gang, and officers had received many threats prior to the introduction of the bike unit. An additional eight members of the department's Crime Impact Team were assigned to assist with the Jordan Downs area, specifically with crowd control, detaining suspects, and transporting prisoners.

The majority of the city's developments are two story, cinder block constructed buildings, containing five to twenty apartments. All of the developments

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INSIDE

Chair's Column

On the IPMBA Burner

By Allan Howard
Dayton Police Department, Ohio

We are closing in on our goal for a national certification standard for mountain bike police officers. This standard, the Effective Police Cyclist Certification (EPC), should be on-line by late 1992, early 1993. Prior to running a class of EPCs through at the 3rd Annual Police on Bikes Conference, we hope to do a pilot program in Baltimore, Maryland, in December.

Although the specifics of the certification are still being finalized, it will parallel L.A.W.'s Effective Cycling (EC) Certification. EC has been in existence since 1976 and is the only nationally-recognized bicycling education program. Its hallmarks are on-the-road training and an emphasis on learning to ride safely and effectively in all conditions of road and traffic. EPC will be similar but will also include questions and road test procedures that are germane to our job as mountain bike cops. The certification will not include arrest techniques and police procedures since these standards vary from state to state and are already covered by our own training bureaus. I'll keep you informed of the details as they develop.

Some other items on the IPMBA burner:

- 3rd Annual Police on Bikes Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida — promises to be the biggest and best yet.
- IPMBA Board elections, coming up at the conference. Watch IPMBA News for details.
- Police mountain bike competition, also at the conference.
- Bigger newsletter, more often, more input and communication.
- Nationwide database of members, equipment, and manufacturer contacts.

These are some of the things that I think will make our organization larger and stronger, but these ideas don't amount to a hill of beans without you. Our progress has been steady and sure, and I believe with your support it will continue. Until next time, don't let the bad guys or the pavement magnet get ya.

L.A. From Page One

are sprawled out and resemble small villages. Major city streets run along the perimeter of the developments but leave the interior inaccessible to patrol cars. The inner areas also manifest a variety of obstacles for mountain bikes, such as clothes lines, cement planters, low retaining walls for sand boxes, stairwells, and low wire fences.

As officers began riding in the developments, they found that some of the techniques they had been taught in bike training were not working. Pursuits are a good example. I had always been taught that when pursuing a running suspect, it is best to tire him out or wear him down by staying on the bike as long as possible. Using two officers, one as lead or sprinter and one as tail or radio officer, is also standard practice. The problem we face, though, is that the majority of people we chase live within the development. Gangs have set up safe houses, usually in the middle of a building. The suspect will run to the apartment where the door is always left unlocked, enter the front or rear door, lock it from the inside, and flee out the opposite door. The suspects have also run inside apartments of unsuspecting residents, which has resulted in barricaded suspects and the destruction of evidence.

To counter these tactics officers have tried numerous techniques. One was to have the tail officer go to the opposite door when a suspect ran inside, but this didn't work well due to the long length of some of the buildings. Following the suspect straight into the apartment worked if there were no unfriendlies toward police inside.

The tactic that we have found to be most successful is the Swarm or Bike Pack, but it can only work with three or more bike officers. When the suspect begins to run, all officers sprint after the suspect and try to take him down as quickly as possible. This technique has worked many times in the Watts Developments, but the key to its success is a team that has practiced and works together well. To perform this technique, two bike officers sprint after the suspect, one on each side, with the third officer riding tail and transmitting on the radio. If more bike officers are present, we have them parallel the pursuit on opposite sides of the buildings. One officers rides near the walls of the building, trying to discourage the suspect from entering an apartment, and also to be on a door quickly if the suspect does get inside.

Officer safety is the key issue when patrolling housing projects or any high crime area by mountain bike. My partner and I have had a suspect lynched from us by a large mob in the Jordan Downs Development. If we had a patrol car or back-up that was closer than four minutes away, that might not have happened, but it did and we don't let that stop us from doing our work. We chased and caught the suspect a week later. He was convicted of robbery and sentenced to eight years in state prison.

Officers should always ride two, three, or more in housing projects or areas where large criminal groups congregate, but never alone. As you begin to patrol these areas on a bike, you will find that the good people who have been terrorized by the bad will begin talking to you. They will often supply you with important information that they were scared to give the passing patrol car and unwilling to share with a faceless voice on the other end of the phone.

The Housing Authority Police Department's Mt. Bike Program has been very successful in solving problems with tactics and also with the problems in the City of Los Angeles' Housing Developments. Our department has plans of continuing and expanding this very progressive and productive detail. Any questions or correspondence can be addressed to Officer Kennoth Alexander, 1404 West 6th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017, or by calling (213) 484-0914, Fax (213) 484-5395.

IPMBA News

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Training

Proper Braking Techniques to Stop on a Dime

By Allan Howard
Dayton Police Department, Ohio

Learning how stop a bicycle effectively should be second only to learning how to balance. Before I show anyone the finer points of riding a bicycle, and this includes "experienced cyclists," I teach them how to brake properly.

The brakes that are found on today's crop of high-quality bicycles are extremely efficient. It doesn't really matter if they're single pivot side pull, dual pivot side pull, U brake, or cantilever — they'll all stop you on a dime using the proper technique.

The myth that merely touching the front brake will bolt you over the handlebars is completely untrue. Only a combination of mistakes will cause this. When a motorist stops at a red light he doesn't engage the front and rear brakes separately, and neither should a cyclist. The front brake on any vehicle, whether it's a car, motorcycle, or bicycle, is more efficient because of weight transfer. Using the front and rear brakes in unison will reduce stopping distances dramatically. Following the principle that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, we can understand how the front brake welds so much power.

When you apply either the front or rear brake, the bicycle begins to slow and your weight transfers forward because of inertia. This process occurs no matter which brake you apply. If you apply the rear brake forcefully enough the rear wheel will skid. This is because your weight and the weight of the bicycle have transferred forward and lofted the rear wheel. A wheel that is skidding during the braking process is rendered completely useless. You have no control over a locked wheel, and its stopping capabilities are only slightly better than if you weren't braking at all.

There are two types of braking actions: **planned and unplanned.** Planned braking would include stopping for a stop sign, speed reduction prior to or just after a turn, or anytime you know you need to slow down or stop well in advance of having to do so.

Unplanned braking is the immediate need to reduce speed as rapidly as possible because of a previously unknown or unforeseen obstacle or condition.

When riding at a moderate speed, using planned braking, you can use both the front and rear brakes to stop without making any adjustments to your body position. The key to this process is to apply both brakes evenly and smoothly. This sounds very simple, and it is. There are some conditions that exist during planned braking to which you should pay special attention:

1. Brake before and after a turn, not while in the turn itself. The tires' contact with the road is minimal while you're in the turn, and braking increases your chances of having the bike slip out from underneath you. Always try to remain as upright as possible while braking, especially during wet conditions.

2. Try to steer toward a clean portion of the pavement before beginning to brake. Braking ability is greatly reduced if you are on a loose surface. Such things as gravel, road debris, oil, and even water can make a big difference in how long it takes you to stop.

3. In wet weather, apply the brakes prior to the time that you need them. Give the pads and rims a few revolutions to dry off, and then brake as you normally would.

There will be times that you'll need to apply the brakes while pedaling. Making a u-turn in a tight space or riding through an area crowded with pedestrians are two examples. When a car makes a u-turn the driver is not saddled with the responsibility of staying upright against the forces of gravity.

When riding a bicycle, your tools against gravity are power and momentum. If you don't apply power to the pedals during a tight u-turn, the front wheel, which has been turned drastically to one side, will cause the bicycle to lose momentum. Once momentum is lost only luck or extreme skill will keep the bicycle upright.

If you apply the rear brake lightly but continuously and pedal slowly through the u-turn, the bicycle will almost balance itself. Notice I mentioned using only the rear brake. Normally the bicycle is leaned, not steered. A tight u-turn at slow speed is a pure steering experience. Using the front brake while the front wheel is at a near 90 degree angle will cause the bicycle to stall.

In areas crowded with pedestrians, light but continuous pressure on the front and rear brakes while pedalling slowly will give you the maximum amount of low speed control. In both of these circumstances use a low gear so you can make small speed adjustments.

A good example of unplanned braking is the panic stop. Just as the name implies, the goal is to get to 0 mph in a hurry. Unplanned braking requires the use of your eyes, brain, and body.

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Private Sector From Page One

of the many fiscal constraints facing not only the law enforcement community but the private sector as well, establishing a bicycle unit can save dollars. When comparing the purchase of a vehicle, which includes costs associated with maintenance, gas and insurance, a bicycle program just makes sense.

Ecological benefits are only noted to add to the appeal of such a program. For those congested areas, a bicycle unit would assist in meeting the AQMD standards for either a government or private institution.

Last, but not least, is the benefit to the employee: a self-serving physical conditioning program that keeps your employees in shape, and you reap the advantages.

From a private sector standpoint, such a program also offers increased interaction with local law enforcement to create a safer environment for all of us to enjoy.

That brings us back to our original question, fad or phenomenon? Personally, I think phenomenon. Bicycle units are here to stay. If you have an opinion, please write it in a letter to the editor.

Braking From Page Three

Use your eyes to search for possible conflicts with cars, pedestrians, and road conditions or hazards. Once you have visually identified a possible conflict, mentally summarize the many ways this unplanned condition could affect you. Here's an example:

You are approaching an intersection where you plan to continue straight through, and a car passes you on the left. Several scenarios are possiible: the car could also continue straight through the intersection and not produce any problems for you at all; the car could make an immediate right hand turn after passing and force you to either turn with it or make a panic stop; or immediately after passing you, the car could pull to the curb with the brakes on to get a parking space, requiring a panic stop on your part.

Watch the driver's actions for an educated guess as to what he may do. What is he looking at? If he is approaching the intersection and looking to the left, chances are that he will make a right turn in front of you. By watching for possible conflicts and thinking ahead about escape plans, you are able to react quickly.

Your eyes and your brain are only part of the panic stop, though. You have to understand the mechanics of the technique as well. The key to effective stopping is weight transfer. When you reduce speed with the brakes, your weight transfers forward. If you brake too aggressively while seated, your weight will transfer too far forward on the bicycle and your face will be sucked to the ground by the pavement magnet. Pitchover occurs when your center of gravity moves toward the stem and handlebars of the bicycle. To reduce the chances of this, you must transfer your weight toward the rear of the bicycle prior to aggressive braking.

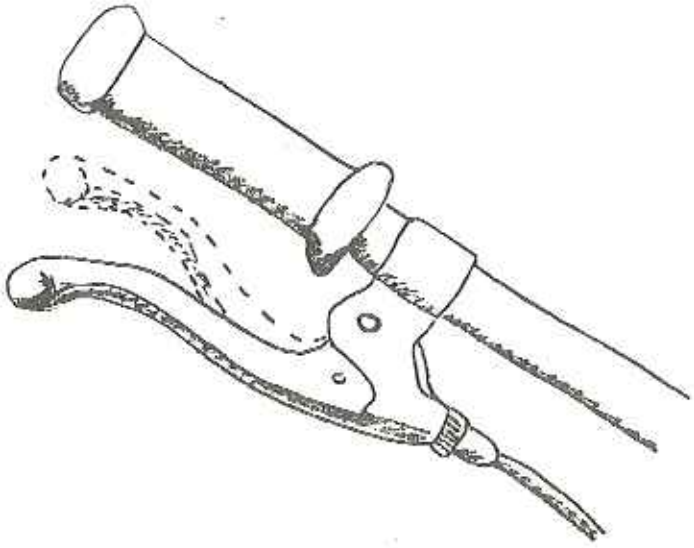
Knowing how weight transfer works will help you understand why the front brake is more effective than the rear. Here is the formula for an unplanned or panic stop.

Start by placing the pedals in the 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock positions, or horizontal to the ground, and thrusting your buttocks out of the seat and over the rear axle. When transferring your weight to the rear of the bicycle keep in mind that you want your buttocks to go straight back, not higher than the seat and not lower.

This starts the forward transfer of your weight from well behind the saddle and makes pitchover almost impossible. Mind you I said almost impossible. Don't expect to make a series of mistakes and get away without laying down some skin.

After transferring your weight over the rear axle you firmly apply the front and rear brakes. Be sure to only use your index and middle fingers on the brake levers. There are two reasons for this: first, holding onto the handlebars with your thumb, ring and little fingers allows you to remain in complete steering control during braking, and second, using all four fingers on the brake lever doesn't allow for minute adjustments in lever pressure.

Apply the front brake a little harder than the rear, because the front brake is the most effective. If the rear wheel starts to skid, your weight has transferred forward a sufficient distance to loft the rear wheel. Slightly reduce pressure on the front brake lever until the rear wheel stops skidding. This process reduces the forward weight transfer and gives you the maximum amount of braking power that your brakes have to offer without risk. If you choose to ignore the sound of a skidding rear tire while both brakes are engaged, call your travel agent, because you are about to take a trip.



Once the bicycle has stopped, slide your buttocks forward until you are over the top tube of the bicycle frame. At this point you should be intimately familiar with whatever pedal retention system you are using so you can put a foot down to balance. Granted, falling over because your feet are trapped in the pedals isn't going to hurt like hitting a car or a brick wall, but it is embarrassing.

A pedal retention system that does not incorporate the use of the hands to gain release is ideal for unplanned braking. Toe clips and straps can also be used but they must be loose enough so you can extract your foot without using your hands.

Elements of a panic stop:

1. Place pedals in the three and nine o'clock position.

2. Thrust buttocks off the seat and over the rear axle.

3. Apply front and rear brakes with the index and middle fingers only, insuring that the front brake is engaged a little harder than the rear.

4. Listen for evidence of a rear wheel skid and compensate if necessary

5. Slide forward over the top tube of the frame and put a foot down to balance.

Earlier I told you that it's almost impossible to take a trip over the bars when you use the proper technique. I'm going to give you a couple of circumstances where bad position and technique can catch up to you in a hurry.

Say for instance you were descending a steep hill and you didn't push your buttocks back as far as you could. The bad position would be magnified by two factors: the hill's forward transfer of your weight and the braking action. This could cause you to pivot over the bars. The solution is to make sure your weight is thrust as far back as possible and reduce pressure on the front brake when the rear wheel starts to skid.

Another special circumstance would be if you were required to make a panic stop on flat terrain with numerous potholes. Allowing your front wheel to drop into a hole of any size will increase the forward weight transfer. According to your speed and the depth of the hole, it could be sufficient enough to pivot you over the bars. The solution is to steer around any obstacle that would increase your forward weight transfer while braking.

With rules, there are exceptions. Descending a set of stairs is not a bad time to use the front brake. Actually it's about the only friend you have on long stair decents. Although it seems like the front wheel would "dig in" as soon as you touched the front brake, this is not true. If you have your weight moved toward the rear axle, gravity will allow your front wheel to float over the steps instead of digging in. One of the chief reasons for this is that the front wheel never really touches the flat portion of the stair tread. Usually during stair decents, both the front and rear wheels are riding edges of the steps as opposed to the flat portions we use when walking up or down them.

In the next issue of *IPMBA News* I will share some training exercises that will help you develop good braking technique.

Orlando, Florida Police Department

By Sgt. Paul Grady
Seattle Police Department

While most of us naturally associate Orlando with the words "Disney World," the fact is that the city likes to distance itself from the theme park, some 15 miles from the city. Orlando is the largest city in central Florida and the county seat of Orange County, Fl. Once a thriving citrus- producing community, Orlando has now grown to be a model of a modern, diverse American City. Orlando has a population of 195,000 within the city limits. The Orlando Police Department has 550 sworn Officers and 200 civilians.

In the summer of 1991, Sergeants Ron Roth and Pete Gauntlett took upon themselves the task of researching a mountain bike squad for the Orlando Police Department. Over the next nine months, both spent numerous hours researching patrols across the U.S. and even travelled to Seattle on a fact-finding mission riding with the Seattle Police Patrols. What was to come out of the research was one of the best prepared staff research proposals that I have seen to date. The proposal was submitted to Chief Hurlburt, and the green light was given to the program in the spring of 1992.

Where the Orlando Police Department differs from many departments' mountain bike patrols is the size. The Orlando Police Department started with 32 full-time officers on its patrol.

The administration recruited department-wide and conducted a selection process for prospective mountain bike officers to ensure that the cream of the crop would be selected for the pilot project. Orlando's bike patrol made its debut in May of 1992, hitting the street on days and nights. Two officers were assigned to a street drug unit working in uniform, two to the International Drive "strip" patrolling high crime areas around the tourist Motels, ten to downtown Orlando replacing all existing footbeats, and eighteen to neighborhood patrols.

Sgt. Gauntlett supervises the downtown patrols while Sgt. Roth currently supervises the neighborhood patrols. According to Sgt. Roth, a 19 year veteran of the force, "This is an overwhelming success. It's not only the most productive new program we have ever started, it's also the most fun I have ever had." Roth's neighborhood patrols have made arrests for everything from murder to theft and have had a positive impact on reducing crime in the housing projects and high crime areas of the city. All mountain bike officers chip in to assist patrol on calls and carry all necessary paper work to perform routine patrol duties.

Chief Hurlburt intends to expand the patrols in October of 1992, adding another eight officers, making Orlando's squad one of the largest in the country.

Each Issue, IMPBA NEWS will feature a profile of an existing Police Mt. Bike Unit from around the world.

The 32 man Orlando Police Mt. Bike Unit in their training uniforms outside the Orlando Police Department. Dean Cass photo

Equipment and Uniforms

Mt. Bike: ..... Raleigh Police Special
Helmets: ..... Giro Prolite
Shorts: ..... Regulation pants cut to shorts
Shirt: ..... Golf shirt with embroidered badge summer, regulation uniform shirt winter.
Gun Belts: ..... Regulation leather
Vest: ..... Mandatory
Shoes: ..... Hi-Tech modified with smooth soles
Sidearms: ..... Sig Sauer 9mm
Baton: ..... ASP Expandable
Radio: ..... Colar Mikes on whistle.
Mt. Bike Training: ..... 32 hours
S.O.P's? ..... Being Written
Staff Study: ..... Yes

Statistics

Sworn: 550
Population: 195,000
Laterals: ..... No
Salary range: ..... $25,359 first year
$37,915 10 years
Vacation: ..... 2 weeks starting to 5 weeks after 18 years
Holidays: 7
Hiring Process: ..... Pre-screen Interview, Written Civil Service, Polygraph, Medical, Physical Fitness, Background, Psychological Evaluation, Final selection.
Retirement: .... 60% salary at 20 yrs.
80% salary at 25 yrs.
Equipment: ..... everything provided
Benefits: ..... Medical, Dental, Life, Insurance.
Information: ..... (407) 849-2473

Uniform Needs of the Bike-Mounted Police Officer (part II)

By Sgt. Joseph Martin,
Hayward Police Department, California

Eye protection is very important. Officers on bikes have no windshield to screen out dust, bugs, and other junk flying around in the air. Sunglasses help do that, and at the same time protect the eyes from the sun's ultra violet rays (getting cops to wear sunglasses shouldn't be a problem). Amber lens are great in low light conditions, and clear lens are a must for night riding, since the absence of the sun removes only one of the hazards to the eye. Invest in good quality eye protection. There are a number of glasses designed specially for cycling. Some are actually available in colors other than neon green or pink! Many manufacturers are offering substantial savings to departments. Check with your local distributors.

Third Annual P.O.B. Conference To be Informative and Fun

by Scott Virden
Bel Air (Md.) Police Dept.

Greetings once again. As I said in the last update, I will be doing my best to keep everyone informed on the planning for your 3rd Annual P.O.B. Conference.

You should have already received an initial notice for the conference, along with a request for video tapes of your agencies' adventures, trials, and tribulations. These notices have been sent to give prospective attendees ample time for arm-twisting the money people and also to cut down on costs. By sending registration packets only to those who ask, we'll be able to cut postage substantially. If you have not received the announcement, contact Denise at L.A.W. headquarters and she'll be happy to send you the information.

Conference plans are moving along rather smoothly. The agenda has been set, and prospective speakers are being notified. We have been working with Broward County and other surrounding agencies to put together what we hope will be a challenging and fun mountain bike competition. There will be slots for established teams and drop-in teams. IPMBA has also been hard at work developing an Effective Police Cycling course. This course will certify officers as Effective Police Cyclists, and will take place just prior to the conference. It will be optional, and there will be an additional cost to attend.

A quick note about the call for videos. It is our intention to combine clips from the various videos, set them to music, and show it at the opening meeting to the conference. This is your big chance to show off and maybe gain a little publicity for your program. Who knows, someone might even ask for your autograph!

Well, that's all for now. Anyone having ideas or comments about the conference are still encouraged to drop us a line or call.

International Police Mountain Bike Association Governing Board

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