

# ALBANY STROLLERS AND ROLLERS

## BRIDGING THE GAP FOR HUMAN-SCALE TRANSIT

History: Albany Strollers and Rollers (AS&R) was founded in 2004 by Preston Jordan and Nick Pilch. The original impetus was the dangerous freeway onramp crossing on westbound Buchanan to reach the Bay Trail, and the need to create a safe alternative to both the freeway onramp crossings and the available but undeveloped pathway under the freeway accessed by crossing the railroad tracks.

GPC members Amy Smolens and Sherie Reineman, both active cyclists and longtime bicycle commuters, joined AS&R in 2005 to become better informed and to have a hand in steering the course of transit and proposed development in Albany. Issues affecting bicycle and pedestrian transit included Bay Trail connections at the waterfront and the bike lanes along Marin Avenue. In 2005 AS&R had about 40 members; it now has 163, a 300% increase.

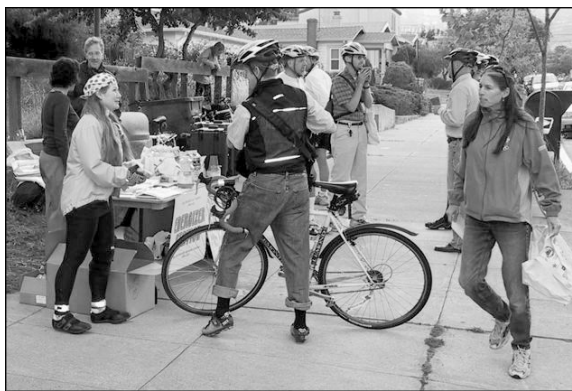
The group's mission, as a part of the community, is to increase bicycle access, bicycle-safety, awareness, and safe routes for bicyclists and pedestrians within Albany, especially those routes which funnel into the Bay Trail and into our neighboring communities. We aim to improve facilities in Albany, and provide support and guidance to the City of Albany within the goals of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and the State and Regional transit plans — with a focus on maintaining our bike friendly and Green community.

Albany has the second highest (to Berkeley) cycle to work mode share of cities in Alameda County. In 2000, the most recent year for which statistics are available, it was 4.1%. Judging from the number of bicycles we've all seen on the roads lately, those numbers have certainly risen dramatically since then. Albany is in the top 3% nationally compared to similar size towns with regards to number of residents biking and walking to work.

The beauty of a small city like Albany (18,000) is that the government not only pays attention to us but asks for our involvement. Our input is respected by city officials and we are in a position to get projects implemented. We make sure to have at least one member at the monthly Traffic & Safety Commission meeting as 'watchdogs' for cycling and pedestrian

issues. Sometimes meetings that don't seem to even be related to cycling issues have a cycling aspect to them. As cyclists, AS&R members are in a knowledgeable position to bring up questions for the City or the Commission which might otherwise not be considered. An attending member then does a write-up about the meeting and sends it to the AS&R list so everyone is aware of what's happening and can get involved.

Albany is small, but in a crucial location as the crossroads of the East Bay and to the Bay Trail, which we all use. GPC members are likely users of Albany streets and bike facilities, as commuters and recreational cyclists, so it's in everyone's best interest to become involved in and support AS&R and Albany's cycling issues. We'd like to encourage GPC members who live not only in Albany, but in contiguous communities, to join Albany Strollers and Rollers (It's free!) and become active in improving cycling conditions in the East Bay.



*Energizer Station, Bike to Work Day*

AS&R Bicycle Advocacy Events: Energizer Station at Bike to Work Day (Annual - Marin & Ohlone Greenway): In addition to the items donated by the official sponsors, we negotiate directly with local merchants for extras -- Solano Avenue Cyclery, The Missing Link, Tay Tah Café, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Safeway -- water bottles, patch kits, coupons, drinks -- conveying a message that we want to get people on their bikes, but also show the community that there are a lot of cyclists in Albany and they should respect and welcome them. The number of commuters

stopping by our Energizer Station increased from 93 in 2005 to 364 in 2008.

Greening Albany — "A Community Event to Fight Global Warming" (June – Annual): Sponsored by the Albany Green Chamber



*Commuter family, Bike to Work Day*

of Commerce, whose mission is to show local residents various ways to live their lives in a Green fashion. In 2007 Councilwoman Joanne Wile approached us to have a booth at the event, saying "We really want a good bicycle presence at the event." Members brought various types of bikes, bicycle safety equipment (lights, reflective clothing, etc.) and accessories to demonstrate options for using bicycles as viable means of transportation for commuting and daily errands. We spoke to residents of Berkeley, El Cerrito, Richmond, Kensington and Oakland, in addition to Albanians. The aim is to get everyone using their bikes as everyday transportation as much as possible.

**(Albany Strollers continued next page)**

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The Albany Spring Art & Music Festival is an annual event: To get prospective cyclists in the community prepared for the upcoming Bike to Work Day, AS&R teamed with Street Level Cycles, who volunteered mechanics and a double work stand for the day. The booth tuned up 60+ bikes in the five hours of the Festival and signed up 25 new members. Better yet, we saw a few of those people whose bikes we tuned up on Bike to Work Day! Recently Amy saw one of the women with her kids on BART with their bikes who reminded Amy that we tuned up all three of their bikes!

We knew we were accepted in the community when earlier this year the city asked for one of our members to be on the selection committee choosing the firm to design the Buchanan Street bike path and extension of Marin Ave bike lanes. That's a crucial link between the Ohlone Greenway and the Bay Trail. The US Department of Agriculture is blocking the bikeway from going on the South side of Buchanan on their property, due to "homeland security" issues. Preston Jordan has contacted Barbara Lee and other politicians to request their involvement. Again, this access is important for anyone who uses the Bay Trail.

Why GPC?: As GPC members, we are aware of the club's involvement and interest in supporting local bicycle advocacy; an example which comes to mind is GPC's donation of the park bench at Bovine Bakery which was purchased with GPC funds and installed with Mark Sapiro's generous labor as a good faith "give-back" gesture to that community. Since bike advocacy, especially locally, is high on GPC's priority list, we think, as club members, that Albany Strollers and Rollers is a worthy organization and a logical choice for the club's support.

GPC members interested in joining AS&R can email either Amy Smolens (calamari@alumni.duke.edu) or Sherie Reineman (bikedive@mac.com) and we will sign them up. It's a low volume list but especially now with the Buchanan Street path on the line, involvement is crucial.

—Amy Smolens and Sherie Reineman

**(My Ride...continued from page 1)**

After a while, we got back on our bikes ... And little by little we began to climb another hill. It was so nice to see all the riders wearing yellow jerseys; they looked like a procession of laborious bees ...

They got away from us, but we saw them again at the regroupings ... Always friendly, funny, and in an excellent mood. It was a real pleasure to be part of that group, although it was only for part of the ride; they were a source of inspiration to us. They made it look so easy, to ride a very hilly unsupported double century. Captain Sue and I would like to train to be able to do it too, or maybe a shorter variation of 150, 170 miles ... We would like also to be part of the gourmet breakfast at 5:00 a.m., and the gourmet feast (second dinner) at the end.

Back at Occidental, after our glorious 85 miles, we couldn't find anybody; we learned later that they have decided to postpone dinner there. Captain Sue and I decided to treat ourselves to some delicious hors d'oeuvres, accompanied by some wine and Perrier ... Seated outside in the courtyard we were transported to the Mediterranean Riviera, was it the soft afternoon sunlight that created this mirage, or the combination of hard climbs and fast descents, or the fact that we were a team working in unison?

—Estella Garcia

P.S. Many of you may wonder who Captain Sue is ... I have known her for several years. She is a very experienced long endurance rider, has participated in several Paris-Brest-Paris rides, numerous brevets, and had years of experience as a captain and a stoker. And ... she is a wonderful person.

The Double Century I am referring to is the "The Single Crown, King Ridge Double", lead by Mark Abrahams, and Veronica Tunucci, on July 12, 2008.

## Discounts For GPCists

The following stores offer discounts to GPC members

- Alameda Bicycle in Alameda
- Bike Threads in Los Gatos
- Castro Valley Cyclery
- Cyclesports, Oakland
- Cycle City, Alameda
- Encino Bicycle Center in Walnut Creek
- Fresh Air Bicycles, San Francisco
- Hank & Frank Bicycles in Oakland and Lafayette
- Istanbul Express, Berkeley (coffee)
- Left Coast Cycles, Berkeley
- Martinez Cyclery in Martinez
- Medina Cycleworks in Berkeley
- Mike's Bikes in Berkeley
- The Missing Link in Berkeley
- Montano Velo in Oakland
- The Pedaler in El Sobrante.

- Sharp Bicycles in Lafayette
- Solano Avenue Cyclery in Albany
- Stone's Cyclery in Alameda
- Summit Bicycles in Berkeley, Burlingame, Los Gatos
- Transports in Oakland (good for GU)
- Velo Sport, Berkeley
- Wheels of Justice, Montclair, Oakland

Most discounts are 10%, but policies vary from shop to shop about discounts on bikes and items on sale. Be sure to ask about the discount if you're unsure.

Many stores require members to show their membership cards to get their discount, so be sure to carry your GPC card with you during buying sprees. If you find new stores that will offer discounts to GPCists, please have them call John Swanda at (415) 221-3312 so we can add them to this list