

# HOW TO PUT ON BICYCLE EVENTS FOR A LIVING: A USER'S MANUAL

## I.

I have more fun at work than you do. On a sunny day I have the best job in the world.

I earn less than you do. On a rainy day I have the worst job in the world.

I can spot at 100 yards an unlocked public bathroom, electrical outlet, or water spigot—the basics of a bike ride rest stop.

## II.

Gatorade: 181.794175 gallons

Bananas: 362.737864 pounds = 9.0684466 cases

Pies: 60

## III.

I start rides at 31st St. & 8th Avenue because it's a transportation hub. I arrive an hour before anyone else, just to think the big thoughts. There I am again, at 2am, sleepless, with an illegally parked rental truck.

## IV.

My tools:

Jetro & Costco cards

3 truck companies

4 bakeries

Custom sock-maker

Rented Nextels

15 Web sites

5 custom water-spigots

Names of permit clerks in six towns

Cell number of peach farmer

Photocopies

Volunteers

## V.

Marking the route takes a couple of very long days.

It also means watching out for the cops. I put on jeans, a white T-shirt, and my best *I-work-for-the-city-so-don't-even-ask-if-I-have-a-permit* look. At day's end, I am exhausted and cranky, my car is littered with fast-food wrappers, and my sneakers are spray-painted pink.

Debbie and Marjorie are much better at this than I am, and I kneel at their feet.

## VI.

I created the Boston Bicycle Show and the New York City Bicycle Show.

For me, they are a gathering of the tribes—the messengers and racers and commuters and century riders, and the bike stores and manufacturers, and the bike clubs and charity rides....

I thought that all I had to do was announce the shows and cash the checks from the bike companies.

Execs from the biggest bike companies say, "Nine

hundred dollars for a booth? Where am I going to get \$900?"

I've never been so proud, or so scared of winding up broke and homeless.

## VII.

Money.

At a conference of 50 bike tour directors, someone asked, "How many people here get paid for what they do?"

Two hands were raised.

Every fall I sit down and think, "How am I going to pay next year's bills? I have one event that's doing great, another that's growing, and a third that bombed and needs to be replaced with...something...."

Ugh. All I want to do is have fun and ride my bike and sleep indoors in the winter-time. Money.

## VIII.

Volunteers make these rides possible. They range from spectacular to gawdawful. Gawdawful volunteers are rare but powerful.

Then there are the event junkies—put a Nextel in their hands on a dark street corner at 4am, and they smile and twitch. Like me.

## IX.

The customers—they pay good money, they ride hard, they laugh at adversity. I met a guy at the finish line who was soaking wet, cold, muddy, and bleeding. He said, "I had the BEST time today!"

On ALL rides, a solid 1% have a terrible time. They write to say that I am the worst guy in the whole world.

## X.

My heroes:

Bill Graham, the rock-concert impresario. The man with the clipboard and the stop-watch standing in the middle of ecstatic chaos, trying to keep it on schedule.

Paul Sullivan. I'll never be as good a bicycle tour director as you were, but I'll try. Like you, I'm trying to do the right thing AND pay the bills, and you know how hard that can be. Wish me luck.

Charlie McCorkell. When things need to be done for the cycling community, he's always the first one to say, "How can I help?"

Ed Pino. We ran out of ice. So Ed took cash from the drawer and bought more. He didn't call to ask if we should buy ice. He didn't fill out a requisition form. He just bought the damn ice, because the customers wanted ice. Ed GETS IT.

Paul Curley. I once saw him load 30 bicycles into a refrigerated truck because IT HAD TO BE DONE.

## XI.

The best part of this job is doing things in my own wacky way. That style is not for everyone, but enough people out there feel the same. We all get together and have a blast. I'm the luckiest boy in the U.S.A.

## XII.

Ride hard. Have fun. Don't act like a jerk.

*Glen Goldstein owns Bicycle Shows U.S., which creates bike rides and events.*