

## NYCC Archives – February 2012

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### February “President’s Message”



By Ellen Jaffe

Fellow NYCC Members,

After our jam-packed SIG Club meeting on Tuesday, February 14, with prospective Siggies winding up the stairs and out into the ground-floor bar at Annie Moore’s, it was no surprise to see that a few hundred New Yorkers sat by the “Send” button at 8am on Tuesday, February 15, when SIG and STS registration officially opened.



With everything so quickly close to full, opening day has clearly become an event as word is out that spots in our renowned program go fast!

Consider that our 2,200 member base supports a program that trains 500 riders – an astonishing ratio

Pardon if I swell with pride that our all-volunteer engine pulls off such a complex and valued program at such an astoundingly high level.

All praise is due to our SIG and STS chiefs for their superb organization and devotion – to Mitch, Sarah, Wayne, Lisa, George, Victor, Dave, Gerald, Tamara, Laurie and to our 100+ ride leaders behind it. There is no other program in the country like our SIG and nothing that so makes the Club shine.

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One important goal this year, discussed at the first of what we aim to make an annual “SIG Leader Summit,” is our goal to keep the ride calendar full outside of SIG and STS rides for those members who are not involved in either. Naturally that takes leaders and it is leaders we will focus on this year – motivating new leaders to step up and train, partnering them with seasoned leaders.

In particular, it is clear our C ride offerings need shoring up. To this end, I will personally take any leader out to dinner on my own dime if you lead 8 non-SIG C rides in 2012.



I hope everyone has been keeping an eye on the [Silent Auction](#) we are holding in conjunction with the [Kids Ride Club Benefit](#) on March 26.

Thanks to Grace Pineda for running the show and to members who’ve contributed so many terrific items.

City Councilmember Diana Reynes is Honorary Chair of the Benefit this year.

[Better buy that ticket now.](#) We only have 120 of them. Where else will you find a Manhattan benefit for \$75 at such swank digs, with food, drink, gifts and a film screening (“The Triplets of Belleville”)? The answer is nowhere else!

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About our next Club meeting . . .



It's a certainty that Annie Moore's will be space-challenged on March 13 when Janette Sadik-Khan, our esteemed Commissioner of Transportation, speaks at our monthly meeting.

Of anyone in NYC, it is cyclists who owe the Commissioner an unforgettable thank you. I hope we'll rock the room with ours.

\* \* \* \*

Lastly, February 15 was a milestone in the fight for traffic justice in NYC.

The scene was the first ever hearing of the City Council Public Safety and Transportation Committee to focus on NYPD investigation of motor vehicle-on-bicycle crashes . . . or lack thereof.

The tragic death of cyclist Mathieu Lefevre last October 2011 in Brooklyn, twice hit by a truck, dragged nearly half a block by a driver who left the scene and who, when found, denied any knowledge of having hit him, helped catalyze this hearing. No charges were filed in Mathieu's death.



By 10am the hearing room was filled and an overflow room necessary.

The crowd included victims' families and advocates from New York's advocacy organizations and bike tribes, including deeply concerned members of NYCC.

Co-Chairs Vallone and Vacco and Committee members, notably Jessica Lapin, Brad Lander, Gail Brewer and Letitia James spoke with knowledge and force about this extraordinary lapse in the justice system, closely questioning the NYPD brass who were present – exposing for all to see the fact that summonses are almost never issued by responding officers nor are drivers cited for reckless endangerment, no matter if the driver was texting, or making an illegal turn, or distracted or on the phone. Further, rarely is a complete investigation done to learn the true cause of the crash.

Palpable in the room was a collective anger at the obvious fact that there are almost never any real consequences for reckless driving that results in serious injury or death to a cyclist – that an environment has been created whereby careless driver behavior perpetuates itself unchecked.

Finally, it was the testimony of Erika Lefevre that trumped all, as she laid out in raw emotional terms the cost to her and her family on losing beloved son, Mathieu, and having his death compounded by a defensive police department caught in its own institutionalized behavior of treating a crash as an accident, leaving her and her family without justice – forcing them to sue the police department to obtain facts of the case.

Others presented testimony, but it was the families whose stories struck home, guaranteeing this shortfall in the justice system will not recede in our consciousness until the NYPD comes onto our side and makes consequences for reckless driving as much their campaign as it is ours.

With 10,000 shared bicycles about to be added to the city's traffic stream, with bicycling-as-transportation becoming an ever more normalized means of getting around, this issue of 'traffic justice' will continue to be an important focus of NYCC going forward.

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Finally, I'd like to share a passage from a slim memoir by Paul Fournel called "*Need for the Bike*" in which he dissects the experience of cycling like nothing else I've read. Here he writes of Ventoux, a climb I've never done, yet his metaphor resonates . . .

*"The Ventoux has no it-self. It's the greatest revelation of your-self. It simply feeds back your fatigue and fear. It has total knowledge of the shape you're in, your capacity for cycling happiness, and for happiness in general. It's yourself you're climbing. If you don't want to know, stay at the bottom."*

\* \* \* \*

Hope to see you on the road.

Ellen



## Help Reject H.R. 7!

The House version of Transportation Bill H.R. 7, the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act, will set back the cause of alternative transportation by decades.

The bill **defunds** much of public transportation and eliminates all specific funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

You can say "**No!**" to H.R. 7 [here](#).

<http://capwiz.com/lab/issues/alert/?alertid=60975341&PROCESS=Take+Action>

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## Cycling Protocol for Central Park

Jointly developed by the New York Cycle Club and Century Road Club Association, this protocol is intended to serve as a guideline for cyclists training in Central Park.

Remember, we are all ambassadors for cycling now.

New York Cycle Club

Century Road Club Association



### Cycling Protocol for Central Park

1. Ride a straight line and under control.
2. Ride at a speed that is safe for that density of pedestrian traffic.
3. Always yield to pedestrians. If there are pedestrians in or entering the crosswalk *always* slow or stop at a red light.
4. When passing runners, walkers, slower cyclists and other park users always allow several feet of clearance.
5. Reserve fast training rides for the hours of 5:00 am to 8:00 am.
6. Keep training groups small and organized.
7. Consider a bell and the addition of a front and rear

light after dusk. Both are the law.

8. Slower cyclists stay left. Pass on the right when safe to do so.
9. Never ride in the recreation lane when the park is closed to car traffic.
10. Be alert. Be conscientious. Be civil to all park users. Remember the park is full of tourists and locals who do not know the rules.

Your actions and behavior will determine our future use of this precious resource.

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## **2012 AUDAX STS Series**

Are you a SIG graduate or a solid and experienced group rider with great bike handling skills?

If so, check out this year's Audax STS (Spring Training Series). Work with other experienced and disciplined NYCC Audax riders to get into serious shape during 12 weeks of progressively longer and more challenging rides.

## **New York Cycle Club**

### **Audax STS 2012 – Sunday Ride Series**

Are you a SIG graduate or a solid and experienced group rider with great bike handling skills? If so, check out this year's Audax STS (Spring Training Series). Work with other experienced and disciplined NYCC Audax riders to get into serious shape during 12 weeks of progressively longer and more challenging rides.

#### **What is Audax?**

The word Audax comes from the Latin for bold or courageous. In 1897, a group of Italian cyclists rode 200 km between sunrise and sunset, and became known as "les Audacieux." Audax is a riding style in which the group rides at a controlled pace at an average speed of 14mph (22.5 km/h). (Early season the rides will be slower.)

As the Audax STS progresses over the next 12 weeks, the rides will take on greater distances and more

challenging hills, and will cover some of the most attractive and varied scenery in the Greater New York area.

The 2012 Audax STS is designed to build good base miles, enhance group riding skills, improve strength and endurance. Group riding skill will be emphasized at all times. The group leaves and returns to NY together.

### **What to expect:**

- The group will ride non-competitively and together at all times.
- Unsafe riding behavior will not be tolerated.
- To take full advantage of the Audax, participants are encouraged to get in one or two training rides during the week between scheduled rides.
- The first ride will be 4 laps in Central Park. After that rides will be broken down into 2 hours of non-stop riding segments, broken up by 20-minute breaks.
- We don't want to spend all day riding. You will learn about riding efficiently and managing your time at stops.

### **The fine print:**

- All participants are expected to be on time and ready to depart at the scheduled start time.
- Helmets and recently tuned-up/overhauled bikes are mandatory.
- Carry spare tubes and be able to fix your own flats/mechanicals in 10 minutes or less.
- Be able to follow a cue sheet.
- Be willing and prepared to pull.
- Be prepared to be left behind if you take too long at the rest stop. Our goal is to limit breaks to 20 minutes. Thus plan your break!
- Once registered, all riders will be expected to attend at 9 of the 12 rides.

In case of rain or bad weather, riders will be emailed between 7:00pm to 8:00pm on Saturday evening. (Then you can sleep in on Sunday.)

### **Registration**

You can register for the Audax starting Monday, February 6th by sending an email to

annalinedinkelman@gmail.com

Please add AUDAX to the subject line and include:

- Full name
- Email address
- Cell phone number
- ICE (in case of emergency) contact info (name and phone)

For any email inquiries, expect a slow response. I have a crazy schedule and personal email is at the bottom of my to-do list.

The series will be limited to 25 riders.

We're looking forward to a great Audax series in 2012. We hope to see you on the road on Sunday, March 4.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Approx. Distance (miles)</b>	<b>Destination</b>
March 4	1	24	Laps in Central Park
March 11	2	36	Piermont
March 18	3	45	New Jersey loop
March 25	4	50	Nyack
April 1	5	55	Park Ridge
April 8	6	60	Tarrytown
April 15	7	65	Ramapo Valley
April 22	8	70	Mount Kisco/Armonk
April 29	9	70	Westchester
May 6	10	80	South Mountain Road
May 13	11	90	Yorktown
May 20	12	100	New Jersey Century

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## **Shhhh.....OUR SILENT AUCTION FOR KIDS RIDE CLUB BEGINS NOW!**

The items pouring in from members and sponsors astound in their variety and quality.

Check them out, bid on our website and monitor bids as they come in over the next weeks.

The auction ends on March 26 at the Kids Ride Club Benefit.

All proceeds go to the Kids Ride Club.

### ***Do you have an item or service to contribute?***

Examples of items already on the auction block:

- Dinners + Broadway shows
- Photoshop class
- Sports massages
- Kreitler rollers
- Rosenthal Liberty Jerseys
- Bike Fitting

If you can add something to the list, let us know at: [auction@nycc.org](mailto:auction@nycc.org)

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NYCC President Ellen Jaffe and Board Member Carol Waaser along with other concerned club members attended the February 15 City Council hearing on public safety. The focus was NYPD response, or lack thereof, to motor vehicle-on-bicycle incidents.

This is the testimony submitted by NYCC on this critical issue.

### **NYCC Testimony Submitted to the Committees on Public Safety and Transportation**

Chairman Vallone, Chairman Vacca, Members of the Committees: New York Cycle Club is a 76 year-old membership organization of over 2,000 cyclists and one of the largest such cycling clubs in the country.

We applaud you for holding this hearing.

The streets and sidewalks of New York have always been a Darwinian survival test due to the sheer density of New York's cars, bicycles and pedestrians.

New Yorkers love to shave a few seconds off their travel time. Drivers run red lights, make U-turns, open car doors without looking and fail to yield where they should; cyclists ignore pedestrians; and pedestrians surprise cyclists by popping out between parked cars into their paths.

This toxic mix of fast moving motor vehicles with walkers and bicyclists at such close quarters has too often made our city streets dangerous for the more "vulnerable users", namely cyclists and pedestrians.

Further, it is a fact that motor vehicle drivers in New York City are allowed to be reckless with impunity.

We, "vulnerable users", need the police on our side now.

Presently, no matter the degree of carelessness on the part of the driver, a crash involving a bicyclist and car is almost always labeled an 'accident', even if it results in serious injury or death.

Summonses are almost never issued by the responding officer nor are drivers cited for reckless endangerment, no matter if the driver was texting, or making an illegal turn, or distracted or on the phone.

And rarely is a complete investigation done to learn the true cause of the crash.

The astonishing lack of consequences to driver-on-cyclist crashes has created an environment in which careless driver behavior perpetuates itself unchecked.

In a city encouraging bicycling as a viable and sustainable mode of transport, a city about to see 10,000 shared bikes on its streets, this lack of consequences for careless motor vehicle drivers must be addressed.

We need a paradigm shift in the way drivers perceive their responsibility behind the wheel.

This will only happen with NYPD enforcement. It will only happen when there are real consequences for reckless, distracted driving.

New York Cycle Club has tragically lost members over the years to careless or intentionally aggressive drivers who have suffered no repercussions.

Help us make sure we don't lose more New Yorkers this way.

Thank you for turning the spotlight on this serious issue.

Ellen Jaffe  
President  
New York Cycle Club  
president@nycc.org

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## Prospect Park Alliance Meeting about Park Cycling, February 28

In response to last fall's cluster of accidents and community alarm in Prospect Park, the Prospect Park Alliance formed a Road-Sharing Task Force composed of groups representing the various stakeholders, including cyclists.

The Task Force was charged with distilling key concerns and issues surrounding the use of the Drive, brainstorming ways to minimize risk, come up with possible solutions.

Their proposed solutions will be shared with the public at an important meeting on February 28 at the Prospect Park Picnic House at 6:00pm.

If you cycle laps in Prospect Park it is in your interest to be there.



### NYCC Cycling Cap Available in Our Online Store!

Two choices available:

Version 1: "New York City" on reverse of brim

Version 2: blank under brim

The store closes on March 20 with approximate delivery date June 1.

**Please note there are no exchanges or returns.**

*2012 NYCC cap designed by Rolando Felix*

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## "Bold New Direction for the New York Cycle Club"

This month, Velojoy's new series on women who are leading the way to encourage and support cycling in New York City focuses on our own Ellen Jaffe.

[velojoy](#)

a fresh spin on city cycling

[bold new direction for new york cycle club](#)

*Our new series on women who are leading the way to encourage and support cycling in New York City begins with Ellen Jaffe, president of the New York Cycle Club.*

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At the January meeting of the [New York Cycle Club](#) (NYCC) in Midtown Manhattan, guest speaker Paul Steely White, executive director of Transportation Alternatives, delivered a wide-ranging update on the advocacy organization's efforts on behalf of cycling. The crowd was engaged; club members peppered White with questions and voiced their own perspectives.

Business as usual, one would think. A leading cycling advocate talking to a room-full of road cycling enthusiasts. Probably an annual event on the NYCC calendar, right?

In fact, this was a first in the 75-year history of NYCC and the 39-year tenure of Transportation Alternatives. Inviting advocacy into the room — officially — is one indicator of how the oldest and largest recreational cycling club in New York City, with a stated mission of "having as much fun on a bicycle as possible," is boldly embracing the shifting landscape of cycling under the leadership of its president, Ellen Jaffe.



Jaffe (right), a partner in the media production company Davis + Jaffe, has been an NYCC member since 1999 and took the helm in 2011. She oversees a 2,300-member, all-volunteer organization that counts among its myriad offerings a highly regarded spring training series for road cyclists of all levels, a robust schedule of organized rides and special events, and monthly meetings featuring noted speakers.

What the organization has not been involved in publicly is cycling advocacy.

"Issues have been addressed over the years, albeit with unevenness, as much due to the volunteer nature of our club as anything," Jaffe says. "We became advocates last year in a way that we had not been accustomed to before."

### **Ticketing Blitz Galvanizes Club**

The impetus for change was a highly publicized "bike lash" against bad behavior by cyclists in the winter of 2011. Its centerpiece: an unprecedented city-wide ticketing blitz that hit recreational lap-riders on the popular 6-mile Central Park loop particularly hard. NYCC's message board, Jaffe recalls, lit up with accounts of \$270 tickets dispensed for running red lights in the park, even during traffic-free hours at intersections free of pedestrians. During what turned out to be a dark period for cycling in the city in general, NYCC's Jaffe played a key role in uniting diverse interests to "become part of the solution" for a fair and equitable approach to enforcement.

"There was no question that we had to get involved," says Jaffe. "If not us, then who? We had to harness the anger in the club to effect positive change."

Over a three-month period, NYCC joined with the Century Road Club Association, Transportation Alternatives, the Central Park Conservancy and others to work with the New York City Police Department to broker a move away from a "zero tolerance" stance regarding the 47 traffic signals in Central Park.

Beginning in February, NYCC mobilized its membership for a petition drive in Central Park and outreach to city council members and Speaker Christine Quinn. Negotiations that examined a variety of options to support safe, shared recreational use by cyclists and pedestrians in the park led to a [new "understanding," announced in early April](#): Cyclists are to [yield to pedestrians](#) and to slow or stop at a red light any time pedestrians are in the crosswalk. The law remains the law, but officers now have discretion and the focus has shifted to summoning for reckless behavior.

In NYCC's Diamond Jubilee year in 2011, the League of American Bicyclists named it a "Club of the Year," calling NYCC "extremely active" in its community and making note of the Central Park petition drive.

### **Question for Ellen Jaffe: What would you like non-members of NYCC to know about the club?**

*'We have a wonderful training program that starts in March for every level of rider. If you're interested in increasing the distance that you ride, your fitness, meeting a life time's worth of friends and having a blast, this is a great way to get acquainted with the club.'*

### **'We Have to Step Up and Follow Through'**

As Jaffe and the NYCC board see it, engagement with the broader cycling community in the Central Park controversy set a new course. "2012 will be a year of tremendous opportunity because of the building out of infrastructure and growth in cycling in NYC," Jaffe says. "We have to step up and follow through." As one example, she cites supporting enforcement of the "vulnerable users" statute that holds motorists who injure pedestrians and cyclists accountable.

A Bronx native who started riding a bike at age 12, Jaffe is a passionate road and touring cyclist who in one year completed 18 century (100-mile) rides. She has led a variety of the club's spring training series and chaired the organization's signature Escape New York Century Ride.

Jaffe and the club's board of directors have put inclusiveness and unity at the top of the agenda for a club in which speed in the pace line has historically been the coin of the realm.

"I think it's important to remove judgment from the pace people ride; there's no reason why people can't feel equal," Jaffe says. "I want to underline that we're one club with common goals: to be outstanding members of the cycling community, to promote the thing we love, and to have a great time doing it."

### **Growth in Membership and Diversity**

Unlike some clubs that have stagnated, NYCC's membership has grown from 1,800 in 2009 to its current level. It's a trend that Jaffe attributes partly to improved and more assertive marketing and communications. Among her first orders of business was to whip the NYCC website into a more comprehensive and user-friendly format, to cast a broader digital net through social media, and to further strengthen programming and the club's volunteer base.

Jaffe is the third female president in the club's history. Its current membership is 38 percent female and 62 percent male. Within the context of the continuing gender gap in both recreational and commuter cycling, Jaffe says that although the club does not make special efforts to attract women, this is happening "organically" as membership grows. "Last year we had more women and more diversity in our (introductory level spring training series) than ever before," she says. "In addition, our newcomer ride attracted half women and half men." Jaffe also notes that the club sponsored lower-mileage, Sunday social rides for the first time last May during Bike Month, attracting about 40 riders per event.

Although the odometer on her 12-year-old titanium Litespeed road bike has clocked more than 50,000 miles, Jaffe concedes that she has little time for the road these days. Registration for the club's noted [SIG \(special interest group\) training series](#) of progressive rides, which draws 500 participants and leaders annually, kicks off this week. Among upcoming events is a March 26 film screening at the Crosby Street Hotel to benefit the Kids Ride Club, which encourages cycling and healthy habits among youth. The scheduled speaker for club's March meeting? NYC Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan.

"Now, more than ever," says Jaffe, "with all the changes going on in cycling, there's a broader role for the club."

*posted by: susi*

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