



FREEWHEELER NEWS

Newsletter of the Morris Area Freewheelers Bicycle Club

July 22, 2010 Special Edition

Final Thoughts

By John Tetz

First of all I want to say that I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to write this series of articles.

Over my years of dealing with the biking community I constantly saw a lack of awareness in terms of various approaches to using Human Power over a range of different types of vehicles.

Racing is commonly touted to improve vehicles but in the case of the upright bike, a long history shows a frozen overall configuration. Part of this was caused by the racing rules that banned all but the conventional bike. That plus the automobile and the evolving high energy life styles drowned out the use of human power other than sport, exercise and recreational. No need for a change in bike designs for what did exist worked fine for the use it was being put to.



Choices

However by choosing Nature's rules over Man made rules the International Human Powered Vehicle Association along with incorporating organizational goals such as meetings, technical and news magazines, this underground development resulted in a much greater growth in design of other physical layouts (see V6 in this series). Yet these wide ranging accomplishments have remained ignored by the biking media and even the popular media.

Lack of Acceptance

This lack of acceptance has occurred throughout history implying there may be developmental stages in the brain and in the culture. As an example Egyptian art was basically two dimensional frontal views which stayed the same for a few thousand years. It also took until the 1400s for three dimensional perspective in drawing / paintings to come about – surprisingly late for a concept that seems so simple.

Quote from the Catastrophist

Ignoring evidence has also plagued the environmental scientific world. In an article in the June 29th 2009 *New Yorker* where a climatologist (James Hansen) is talking about the problems researchers are having getting acceptance of the environmental information, he says: “If we get this set of facts out in front of everyone they will be so powerful – so overwhelming – that people will do what needs to be done. Of course, that was naïve on our part.”

Collapse

An excellent book that talks about the reluctance to appraise information and make appropriate changes is Jared Diamond's, *Collapse*.

In the book he reviews the reasons for the collapse of several societies scattered around the world. This failure to respond indicates a disconnection from the nature of their surroundings. Symptoms were occurring right in front of them yet they failed to adjust. In contrast he also reports on societies that did observe and did make the necessary changes – a willingness to re-appraise conditions.

Here is a wonderful video of Jared Diamond giving a talk on *Collapse*. It's 20 minutes but if we care about the planet it is worth every minute. The book is more complete and should also be read.

http://www.ted.com/talks/jared_diamond_on_why_societies_collapse.html

Future Possibilities

Looking through public libraries' various magazine selections I am seeing some positive changes. Each has a series of articles on the environment. There is lots of information flowing. I'm even seeing smaller cars on the roads. The ball is starting to roll. The biking world is also starting to make changes but I feel it is still linked too deeply to 19th and 20th century concepts. I'm hoping this series of articles will introduce cyclists to information that they have been cut off from and will open new doors to new possibilities.

The Morris Area Freewheelers Club is in a position to strongly affect needed changes. Even though the biking infrastructure is not there yet, I am looking for pioneering spirited people to use and to be seen using alternate transportation vehicles. This will set examples and encourage others to adopt changes, adding up to political clout that can lead to further improvements in both the much needed cycling infrastructure along with affecting overall energy awareness.

And this will lead to a greater understanding as to
“What it means to be a part of life on this finite planet.”

I have been waiting for 25 years for an appropriate change in HPV activity. At 78 I wonder if I will live long enough to see thousands of Bikes, Cargo Bikes, Recumbents, Streamliners and Velomobiles darting around communities??? Will there come a time when using less of the Earth's resources will become so hip that we will be trying to out do and out brag each other?

We have set up a Forum on the MAFW web site to allow posting questions to John or raising issues associated with Alternative Transportation Vehicles. Just click on 'Forum' on the right menu, after login. In addition, the entire series of these articles will be given its own page on our web site in the near future.