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MONDAY, MAY 17, 2010

ENVIRONMENT Pedal Indy a smashing success
Posted by **Jim Poyser** on Mon, May 17, 2010 at 12:48 PM

On Saturday, May 15, we met at Earth House to gather for the first-ever Pedal Indy, a bicycle adventure that combined an appreciation of cycling culture, with an immersion into the shop-local philosophy.

Cooked up Indycog and Green Broad Ripple, the event was expected to draw a couple dozen enthusiasts, but by the 12:20 departure, organizers were thrilled to announce there were 106 registrants on the list.

As we proceeded on the journey, however, more riders joined, either because they had intended to but could not make the start time, or were riding their bikes on their own, and saw our mass of bicycles and were sucked into the vortex of fun.

All told, I wager there were nearly a hundred and fifty of us, rolling our way all over the city.

For myself, the trip began in my neighborhood, Rocky Ripple. At just after 11 a.m., I headed down the towpath along the canal on my bicycle, connecting with friends along the way, as per the plan. Ashley arrived via the grounds of the IMA; Tedd was waiting for us on the drainage pipe that spans the canal just south of the IMA.

Then two others rode up on bikes, Mary and Jackson — neither of whom had heard of the Pedal Indy event. Mary had other plans, but Jackson immediately joined us.

I don't think any of us had any idea that the event would end up lasting at least 7 hours.

First stop, Joe's Cycles

We left Earth House en route south to Fountain Square to visit Joe's Cycles, a bicycle shop that features anything a bicyclist might need, including coffee and ice cream. This stop last a good twenty minutes, to give all 100-plus riders a chance to pick up supplies, grab an ice cream, meet Joe, whatever. It established the pattern that we were bicycling for community, not for speed or efficiency.

It was, in other words, a chill ride.

A chill ride with some rain, too: as we headed north to Sun King Brewery we encountered a bit of a rain, nothing one could call a storm however, just a bit of a shower. At Sun King we were given sample cups of their brews and the Pedal Indy participants drank and talked and met one another for a half hour or so. We were surrounded by Sun King's new cans, beautiful in design and pretty eco-friendly as well.

From there, we bicycled to The Project School, a two-year old charter school that was in session on a Saturday, due to a lost "snow day." The kids were having a great time, though, as the school day's activities included a bicycle expo, so when we arrived, en masse, a bicycle polo competition began in earnest, while others toured the school and chatted with teachers and students. (Last year, Josefa Beyer wrote about this school and you can read her story.)

Soon we all went north on the Monon, the Project School kids up to Broad Ripple, the rest of us to drink even more beer at Upland Tasting Room. Sun King had ample room for us all, while the charming tasting room is tiny in comparison. Still we could cram a couple dozen folks inside while dozens others stood outside.

All around me, I saw people shaking hands, meeting each other. One of the interlopers I met was Stephanie. She was riding her bicycle in Fountain Square when she spotted us and couldn't resist joining. While she smoked a cigarette she informed me she was a dancer at a south side gentlemen's club.

Just to the side of her was a tall, thin man in Lycra, who looked like he'd been born on a bicycle, and that, for me, was one of the main themes of the day. Sure, you had a dozen folks who looked like competitive bicyclers, the ones who can ride a hundred miles in a day with no problem. Then there was a load of environmentalists who commute on bikes to be green, reduce carbons, traffic congestion, whatever. There were people on the journey who were

involved with various local bicycle groups such as CIBA and Free Wheelin'.

And then there were those who just love bicycles for the sheer pleasure of it, and don't belong to any particular group or cycling subculture.

There were even those who make bicycles a part of their livelihood, including Andy Lutz, Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator at the Dept of Public Works, who got plenty of applause when he was introduced. Bicyclers LOVE bicycle lanes, and Andy has been instrumental moving them forward.

After tanking up on a small glass or two of Upland's fine fare, and enjoying pretzels from Pretzel Pat, we proceeded north just a few blocks to Luna Music, to enjoy a 10% discount on all purchases — more of our shop-local lovefest.

Free pizza, free beer

Finally, we got back on the Monon and rode into Broad Ripple. There at Union Jack Pub, we gathered for pizza and even more beer and socializing. By then, our numbers had dwindled to under a hundred, which meant more beer and pizza for the rest of us.

I spent time at Union Jack talking with Brandon Pitcher, who was on this bicycle journey from the very beginning, and will be speaking at Trinity Church, 6151 N. Central, Thursday night at 7:30 p.m., a free presentation about zero emissions and sustainability.

I finally bicycled homeward around 7 p.m., almost a full 8 hours of fun-on-a-bike, replete with new friends, and a sense that Indy's bicycle community is growing daily.

You can join the bicycling fun on Friday at the Bike to Work celebration. Bike to work on your own, or if you want to engage in the festivities: ride to Monument Circle where breakfast, giveaways and information about bicycling and regular commuting awaits ye. Festivities begin at 6:30 a.m. and you can arrive at the circle up until 8:00 a.m. For more: www.bicycleindiana.org.

And thanks to Indycog and Green Broad Ripple for facilitating one of my favorite Indianapolis days in recent memory.

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This is fantastic. Thanks for the write-up, Jim, and I'm ecstatic that you had such a good time at Pedal Indy.

Posted by [cengewent](#) on May 19, 2010 at 10:03 AM | [Report this comment](#)

AUTHOR ARCHIVES

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by Jim Poyser

Earth Day's a mixed bag

Here on the official Earth Day, Thursday, April 22, it's a predictably mixed bag regarding Indiana and its environmental stewards.

by Jim Poyser

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