

NEW WORKSHOP SERIES TO HELP CHICAGOANS MAKE SWITCH TO BICYCLE COMMUTING

Local cycling experts reach out to new cyclists with knowledge and support

Chicago: A new series of free workshops aimed at helping people interested in exploring bicycle commuting as a main transportation choice gets underway this month.

The first workshop will be held on **Sunday June 29 at the Mercury Café, 1505 W. Chicago Ave., starting at 5:00 P.M.** The approximately one-hour workshop will cover topics of interest to new and novice bicycle commuters looking to feel prepared, confident and safe navigating Chicago streets by bicycle. Admission is free.

RSVP is requested to 773/710-4143 or summerschool@bikechicago.info.

The workshops will be presented by members of Break the Gridlock, an all-volunteer grassroots organization with a mission of helping Chicago reduce its dependence on travel by personal automobile. The series, dubbed "B.T.G. Summer School", is the brainchild of bicycle mechanic and advocate Martin Hazard. Hazard, who comes in daily contact with novice and beginning cyclists through his work as a bike shop staffer and with a lakefront bicycle touring and rental company, reports that he was feeling a rapidly increasing need for basic cyclist education as rising gasoline prices drive more people to consider adopting the bicycle as their mode of daily transport. "It's been a main topic of discussion in the bike community the past few months: how can we help new riders make safe choices, how can we help them to learn what we know, how can we help them succeed", explains Hazard. "Right now it seems like everyone's talking about finding alternatives to the gas pump-- I want to help people make the leap so that they can realize the physical, financial and spiritual benefits of cycling as a daily activity."

Each workshop will be facilitated by a group of presenters, with visual and physical demonstrations. Hazard and collaborators Lauren Sailor and Howard Kaplan hope to be able to present up to two "basic" level workshops per month. The basic workshop will cover subject matter deemed to be most needed by beginning and novice cyclists, including safety, the law as it pertains to cycling, route considerations, locking, recommended gear and accessories, using transit to augment bike commuting, and how to handle unexpected situations. Attendees will receive a resource list to help them identify avenues for ongoing success, including where to get skilled hands-on group and individual instruction if desired, and how to connect with Chicago bike culture. "Special topic" workshops, covering more esoteric subject matter such as cycling with kids, shopping/hauling by bike, and advanced bicycle safety are planned for the future to augment the "beginner" series.

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Mercury Café: <http://www.chimercurycafe.com/>

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