



February 2010 Bulletin

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Submit!

Have you a hankering to express yourself in prose? Do you have a wealth of information to share with the NYCC membership? Have you just returned from some far-flung spot and wish to tell everyone about it? Submit! Submit!

"Prez. Sez," February 2010

By Derek Chu, NYCC President

SIGNificant SIGns of Cycling Have Arrived!

"But the most exciting, challenging and significant relationship of all is the one you have with yourself." — Carrie Bradshaw, "Sex and the City"

Carrie Bradshaw, that modern-day philosopher, offers "SIG-nificant relationship" advice that one may easily apply to cycling - channel your mental and physical strength, challenge yourself by riding longer and faster, cycle for yourself, be excited to have fun while cycling. And most importantly, have a "relationship" with NYCC! (As a guy, I will never publicly admit to having watched Carrie and crew on cable TV, but I do know that Jimmy Choo is unfortunately not related to Derek Chu, and that "Mr. Big" does not refer to the big chain ring on my bike.)

Each spring for the past 24 years, NYCC has offered the SIGs as a structured, progressive learning series to teach group cycling and bike skills to hundreds of bicyclists. This week, the Club opened registration for the 2010 series of the SIGs. SIGn up now - the spots fill up quickly!

In addition, NYCC is hosting two great special events: a "First Aid for Cyclists Class" on Thursday, February 4th, and an exciting "Lunar New Year Dim Sum Brunch" on Sunday, February 7th.

SIGNificant Thanks - February 24 NYCC Volunteers Recognition Dinner

The executive NYCC Board and I have been communicating with the SIG and STS Captains since November. The volunteer Captains must recruit 100 volunteer SIG ride leaders, plan logistics, and structure a cycling training program for 400 cyclists. Thank you, SIG and STS Captains, for your leadership! Let's have a fun, safe and exciting SIG and STS season, y'all!

As a recreational cycling club composed of over 2,100 members, NYCC cannot function without volunteers. Everyone - from the Board of Directors to the ride leaders to our "Escape New York" teams - is an unpaid volunteer. NYCC's sole source of income is from membership dues so volunteers allow NYCC to "keep the bikes rolling." Some of the "quiet" volunteers who work behind the scenes but keep NYCC a smooth-running, well oiled machine include:

Susan Conova - the mailer of Club schwaag to members
Bob Cowin - guru of the Active.com database
Lucia Deng - Event Coordinator for the 2010 West Point Weekend - July 4th
Reyna Franco - Event Co-coordinator for the 2010 Berkshires Weekend - Memorial Day
Tom Laskey - Event Co-coordinator for the 2010 Berkshires Weekend - Memorial Day
Gary McGraime - Event Coordinator for the Newcomers Ride (July) and Connecticut Shoreline Ride (October)
Timothy McCarthy - web elf
Maggie Nguyen - Coordinator and taskmaster for the eWeekly emails
Jim Reaven - "Welcome Table" at Club meetings
Peter O'Reilly - wizard of our web technical team
Hank Schiffman - Club Cue Sheet Librarian (send him your cue sheets!) and liaison to Metro-North Railroad
The Teroskys (Jeff and Aimee) - Coordinators of the SIG Orientation school site.

If you were a volunteer for NYCC in any capacity in 2009, the Board of Directors and I invite you to join us at the "Sixth Annual NYCC Volunteers Recognition Dinner" on Wednesday, February 24 at Ichiumi. Thank you everyone for your efforts on behalf of the Club - dinner is on NYCC! More event information can be found on the [Special Events page](#).

** Volunteer Writers Needed - Send Articles **

In the January Club Bulletin, I issued a call for volunteer writers, editors and B STS Captains. Thank you to those of you who contacted us to help your Club.

This month, the executive Board and I are asking for article submissions about cycling. In 500 words or less, send us your essays on your "significant relationship" with your bicycle and all things cycling -

- What are your cycling goals for 2010?
- Why is your bike SIG-nificant to you?
- What motivates you to train and ride your bike?
- How do you structure your week to balance work and family to find cycling time?
- What's your favorite ride destination and why?

SIGns of Transformation

Also in the January Club Bulletin, the Board and I announced that 2011 is the 75th Anniversary and Diamond Jubilee of NYCC. Although we are just one month into 2010, I'm immensely proud of the hard work that the energetic 2010 Board of Directors (a.k.a. The Team) has already executed toward the transformation of NYCC into a "diamond." Some highlights of the Board's work:

- Attend every SIG Leaders meeting to review safety, insurance and accident procedures (President, VP-Rides, Rides Coordinators)
- Updated "Ride Definitions" and "Ride Leader Guidelines" content on NYCC.org (VP-Rides and Ride Coordinators - Mark, Adrienne, Alan and John)
- Financial Accounts - All income and expenses are now being tracked on Quicken financial software (Treasurer - Beth)
- Removal of extra \$2 fee for Paper Membership applications/renewals - Approved by executive Board vote at January Board meeting (Membership Director - Crystiina)

- Return as 2010 "Escape New York" Chairperson ensuring event excellence (ENY Chair - Ellen)
- NYCC.org link and activation to Facebook and Twitter (Webmaster and team – Tatiana)

2010 is going to be an exciting, transformational year for NYCC! And Carrie Bradshaw would be proud of NYCC's volunteer "relationships." Eat your heart out, Mr. Big.

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"The SIGs Are Coming! The SIGs Are Coming!"

NYCC is pleased to offer our annual spring SIG ("Special Interest Group") training program to New York metropolitan area cyclists. Registration began at NYCC.org on Monday, February 1st.

The NYCC Board of Directors contacted several 2009 SIG graduates and asked each to write about their SIG experiences. We invite you to read engaging first-hand accounts from our NYCC cyclists of how participating in the A Classic, A19, B and C SIGS transformed them:

- **"C SIG - An Inimitable Experience" by Claudia Kulesh**
- **"B SIG - Great Friends and a Rewarding Team Sport" by Melanie Friedman**
- **"A19 SIG - How My Life has Changed" by Robert Duncker**
- **"A Classic SIG - Fast Fitness Rides" by Laura Lee Vo**



2009 C SIG graduates Claudia Kulesh, Olive Blessing and Aparna Kane
(Photo by Claudia Kulesh)

"C SIG - An Inimitable Experience"

By Claudia Kulesh ('09 C SIG graduate)

One Saturday morning early last March, I hopped on my bike and headed over to Central Park for my first NYCC ride: the C-SIG classification ride. I was apprehensive, a bit chilly, and definitely not prepared for what was to come. I knew I would be riding my longest ride ever ("I have never ridden 18 miles before!"), but I had no idea of the transformation that my fellow "siggies" and I would undergo in a few short months.

At the start of the C-SIG, we were about 100-strong participants and we represented a wide variety of cycling experience, goals, fitness, ages, and even bikes! I showed up with my hybrid, which was

tricked out with heavy metal baskets for commuting; other riders were also on hybrids, and plenty of riders on road bikes who looked to me like they should be going to the start of a race. Was this right for me?

I completed my three laps of the park, and after the classification ride we were segmented into five groups based on our individual times; each group stayed together for the rest of the SIG.

On our first group ride I heard we would be going over the George Washington Bridge. Others in my group had ridden over it before, but as a native Long Islander, I had only crossed the GWB maybe a dozen times in a car. I didn't even know that it was possible to ride across the bridge!

I was excited by the sound of this little trip, but again apprehensive. As we rode single file up to the bridge, we practiced calling out hazards and using voice and hand signals to communicate with the rest of the group. Then there we were...and up the ramp...and the wind, and there was the Hudson below us....and....wow! We're over!

I can still remember the exhilaration of that first group ride. Each week we learned a little more, we practiced a little more, we went a little farther, we went a little faster, talked to somebody new, rode behind somebody different, got better at going up hill, learned the good riding routes, until we finished in May.

Everyone improved so much over the course of the SIG, but it was much more than just a learning experience. The C-SIG had a different impact on each participant, and for me it was significant and unexpected:

- I did not stop cycling after the C-SIG until about the third week of December
- My hybrid now shares storage space with my Trek road bike, acquired over the summer
- Both of my bikes have clipless pedals
- I gained the confidence to go on listed rides with people I don't already know
- I gained the confidence and enthusiasm to lead rides
- I completed the NYC Century ride in September

Each person will have a different list of outcomes, but for sure he or she will have a list. The common thread is that we have all been given a great gift by the C-SIG leaders' commitment to sharing their knowledge and love of cycling with us "siggies," and they have helped to instill within each one of us a nugget of NYCC's esprit-de-corps that infuses our Club and makes the C-SIG an inimitable experience.

[Editor's Note: Claudia will be enrolling in the B SIG in 2010. Go Claudia!]

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Melanie's 2009 B SIG group (Photo by Raj Dodia)

"B SIG - Great Friends and a Rewarding Team Sport"

By Melanie Friedman ('09 B SIG graduate)

I joined the B SIG last year as a way to get out of a winter slump and in shape for spring. At first, I was apprehensive about committing to 10 Saturdays and riding in potentially cold weather, but after the first few weeks, I was hooked.

Prior to the B SIG, I had done only a few group rides but a majority of my riding was solo, along the West Side Highway or around Central Park. The most important thing I learned from the B SIG is that cycling is more rewarding as a team sport.

Riding consistently with the same group each week, enabled me to gain more confidence on the road, push myself further and share my love of cycling with like-minded people.

The leaders were knowledgeable and patient, which contributed to the group dynamic. Another added bonus was learning great, new, accessible routes outside of the city.

After the SIG, I continued to ride into late fall with my SIG buddies and joined/co-led Club rides. Although I haven't been riding much outdoors this winter, I do try to keep in shape by running and using my indoor trainer. I still stay in touch and get together with the great people I met last year.

Now with spring on the way, I can't wait for another season of riding!

I would encourage anyone who enjoys biking to do a SIG. You'll be happy you did it!

[Editor's Note: Melanie will be leading the B17/18 SIG in 2010. Thanks for giving back to NYCC, Melanie!]

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(Photo by Maggie Nguyen)

"A19 SIG - How My Life has Changed"

By Robert Duncker ('09 A19 SIG graduate)

Hello my name is Robert Duncker and I am a graduate of the 2009 NYCC A19 SIG Class. If you are contemplating joining a SIG, my story might help you to decide.

In late 2008, I decided it was time to get back into shape and after reading the A19 SIG synopsis, I knew this was the way to do it. I always liked bike riding but to get the most out of it I knew that I needed to make a commitment, obtain greater riding skills, have a purpose to my riding, and to have friends of similar interests.

If you do join a SIG, and I hope that you do, be prepared to be overwhelmed by the commitment of the group leaders. They work tirelessly to make this program what it is today. I cannot say enough about their efforts to turn ordinary riders into capable, confident cyclists who know how to ride safely, maintain their bikes, and know what to do if there is an emergency.

It has been a year now since I decided to join the SIG program and my life has changed in so many ways. I have made so many new friends along the way with whom I continue to ride with today. For the years ahead I will continue my membership with NYCC and hope that one day I will also be a SIG leader so that I can pass on what I have learned to future cyclists.

Did I mention you get all of this for \$22? What are you waiting for sign up today!

[Editor's Note: Robert will be racing with the CRCA Jordan Coaching/Zephyr Graffiti team in 2010. Allez, Robert!]

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(Photo by Bob Cowin)

"A Classic SIG - Fast Fitness Rides"

By Laura Lee Vo - '09 A Classic graduate

I imagine the SIG is different things to different people. For me, it was a great way to meet some similarly enthusiastic riders at the same level, learn better/proper group riding skills, find some wonderful routes in the area (and a chance to get familiar with those routes without fear of getting lost!), and a way to end up with much better fitness early in the season.

The leaders are dedicated, considerate, knowledgeable...and volunteers, so you know they are really out there for the love of cycling and supporting the riding community. They were so supportive of all of us. The A Classic SIG has a reputation for being a fast group, and it is, but it ramps up gradually and there is a strict no-drop policy, which I was particularly grateful for one day early on when I got two flats before we even hit 9W. I was frustrated and ready to head home at that point, but the leaders and other riders encouraged me to keep going and it turned out to be a wonderful ride.

It was a serious time commitment, and tough when it was still cold and dark in the first weeks, but by the time May rolled around, I was honestly really sad to see the SIG ending and with that the organized ride set up each week with a route planned, a group of experienced, smooth-peddling, friends to go riding with. Of course, at that point, it was time to start organizing and posting our own rides.

I loved the A Classic, and really recommend a SIG at whichever level you feel comfortable. It's a great program.

[Editor's Note: Laura Lee will be cycling with CRCA's NY Velocity race team in 2010. Go get 'em, Laura Lee!]

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February Rides

To see this month's rides listed by the week or month, [click here](#). (password required)

February Events

For a list and description of this month's events, [click here](#).

Bike Shop Discounts

To access your discount card and a list of bike shops offering discounts to NYCC members, [click here](#) (password required)

Bulletin submissions

Members may submit (and are heartily encouraged to do so) contributions to the bulletin editor at [NYCC Bulletin Editor](#). The deadline for submissions is the second Tuesday of the month preceding the next issue.

Ride submissions

For further information click [here](#).

Road Dirt

Observe any dirt? Any social news to impart to the club? Send your scoops to [NYCC Road Dirt](#)

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