



Bilin ng Mamamayang Konsyumer

PROMOTING NMT IN 2005

Going through 2005, this is the year the issues concerning non-motorized mode of transportation (NMT) came into public attention in the Philippine development work. It is the PATH CANADA supported Project on NMT that brought into highlight the pressing need of the times to promote the utilization of NMT to minimize air and noise pollution, to encourage healthy lifestyle, to facilitate people's physical mobility amidst rapid urbanization and as an economical alternative to expensive motorized mode of transportation. The pedicab as a mainstream means of public transportation belonging to the informal sector was also highlighted as a means of livelihood for the unemployed workforce.



To drive home these messages, the Filipino Consumers' Will, FILCONWILL (Bilin ng Mamamayang Konsyumer, BILMAKO) reached out to both private and public sectors.

I. List of activities in 2005

FILCONWILL conducted the following activities:

1. Networking

- a. In January, FILCONWILL contacted those who have personal interest in cycling. Knowing that pedicabs are widely used in certain areas in Metro Manila, interested drivers and operators were invited to join in the consultation meetings.
- b. The networking activities continued when FILCONWILL extended its operations to the provinces. The four provinces, namely Western Samar, Southern Leyte,



Northern Leyte, and Biliran were chosen to be the expansion site because of the information that NMT is a popular mode, either as leisure, sports or public transportation. FILCONWILL focused on the pedicab drivers & operators' associations and cyclists' organizations.

2. Consultation meetings

a. Small group discussions

A series of focus group discussions (FGD) were held from January to February to get the views of different civil society organizations on Non Motorized Transportation. There was consensus among the groups to hold a Metro Manila wide consultation meeting to know more about the extent of the problems confronting the NMT utilization.

b. Metro Manila wide consultation meeting

The FILCONWILL organized a national consultation meeting on February 6, 2005. Eighty six representatives and officers from 14 cyclists' organizations and pedicab drivers' & operators' associations attended the consultation.

c. Follow up consultation meetings

A series of small group discussions were conducted as a follow up to the national consultation meeting. This time, the meetings only involved interested groups such as the pedicab & operators' associations in the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela. The output of these consultation meetings was the establishment of the Federation of Pedicab Drivers & Operators Associations in these four cities.

3. Research

a. Rapid appraisal

The rapid appraisal, the first activity that FILCONWILL did, was roughly done to generate fast information on who are into NMT advocacy and what are they doing. The information was used for networking purposes.

b. National

This focused on the available researches and plans on Non-Motorized Mode of Transportation. Several documents were secured, among them are:

- The World Bank's Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan By The Philippine Government for the Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project
- Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project (MMURTRIP)
- Metro Manila Urban Transportation Integration Study (MMUTIS)
- Air Quality Improvement Program
- Resolutions, Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA)

c. Local

This focused on the ordinances passed by the different Local Government Units including the 12 cities and 5 municipalities comprising Metro Manila, the different cities and municipalities of 4 provinces in the Visayas region.

4. Support to the establishment/strengthening of organizations and federations

Two organizations were formed in 2005, as an offshoot of the organizing work conducted by FILCONWILL. These are the Federation of Pedicab drivers and operators associations, KASAMPADYAK and the organization of priests and lay persons, PADYAK.

FILCONWILL also initiated to support the establishment of a cooperative of pedicab drivers in Sogod, Southern Leyte.

5. Advocacy
 - a. Policy makers
 - b. Media
 - c. General public

The FILCONWILL's advocacy on NMT was directed to policy makers, media and the general public.

To achieve this, the FILCONWILL sponsored several events that were covered by the media and eventually stimulated a renewed interest in NMT. Please see the appendix for the media coverage.

FILCONWILL produced streamers, banners and pamphlets and distributed these to organizations of cyclists and pedicab drivers. Constant distribution aided the popularization of NMT advocacy specially during town fiestas and other festive activities in Metro Manila and countrysides.



II. Results of the activities

A. First Quarter

Research and networking

In January 2005, the FILCONWILL conducted a rapid appraisal of the extent of utilization of Non-Motorized Transportation NMT in Metro Manila. One of the results was a list of organizations of pedicab drivers and operators and people who are into cycling.

After the initial orientation, a FILCONWILL team got in touch with biker's organizations and their leaders, pedicab drivers and owners organizations.

The initial networking covered the suburban streets of the cities of Manila, Malabon, Caloocan, Navotas, Valenzuela and Novaliches, Quezon City. These are blue collar workers' places.



A focused group discussion (FGD) was conducted with a group of cyclists and representatives from organizations of pedicab drivers and operators. The discussions centered on the barriers to the utilization of NMT especially in Metro

Manila. The more prominent barriers are as follows:

- hostile and dangerous street conditions,
- lack of cycling lanes and cycling routes,
- lack of appropriate physical structure for NMT,
- chaotic traffic management system,
- over-dependency on road-based motorized public transportation modes such as buses, jeepneys, and more recently, the 10-seater air-conditioned utility vehicles
- increasing number of private vehicles,
- lack of over-arching national policies that would address the need for a sustainable, environment friendly mode of transportation, such as the NMT ,
- lack of awareness among various sectors about the use of NMT,
- lack of political commitment of the government to develop the transportation sector and integrate the NMT with the other modes of transportation,



- public stigma against the use of pedicab as public utility transport as a sign of backward development.

Metro Manilans who prefer to reach their destination by bike have to take risks while snaking through the streets.

However, despite these barriers, the use of NMT has thrived in a variety of ways, among them are:

- Two main streets within the University of the Philippines, Diliman Campus are closed to traffic on Sundays for families who would like to bike, walk, exercise,
- Pedicabs, or bicycles with attached passengers' seats like the rickshaws. These are being used in short trips within the residential and business areas in Metro Manila, cities and town proper in the provinces. These are also used for long trips such as far as 50 kms to transport goods.
- Cyclists who are sports and health enthusiasts,
- White and blue collar workers who report to their work in bikes.
- The NMT is a popular grassroots issue, and a mode of public transportation utilized most especially by the low income population.



The FGD initially served as a venue to discuss the relevance of NMT's advocacy and its role in social development in the Philippines. The FGD likewise paved the way for several initiatives on the popularization of NMT. One immediate recommendation was to

conduct a Metro Manila wide consultation meeting to deepen the understanding of the issues related to NMT. These initiatives are as follows:

First Metro Manila Wide Consultation on NMT

On February 6, 2005, FILCONWILL organized the first Metro Manila wide consultation on NMT.



On February 6, 2005, the FILCONWILL organized the first Metro Manila wide consultation on NMT. The consultation had three objectives:

- To discuss the challenges faced by the NMT users.
- To agree on possible solutions.
- To mobilize respected leaders, who are themselves NMT users and advocates.

Eighty six (86) representatives and officers of 14 pedicab drivers' associations and cyclists gathered at the cyclists' ring of the Quezon City Memorial Circle.

The consultation's highlight was the workshop on the pressing problems and challenges faced by the pedicab sector and the cyclists in the cities. It ended with the election of an adhoc committee for setting up the Federation of Pedicab Drivers' & Operators' Associations and point of collaboration with policy makers.

Congressman Manuel Zamora who goes to his office at the House of Representative riding a bike, Fr. Roberto "Running Priest Reyes

and Social Anthropologist Arnold Molina Azurin were the guest speakers.

The consultation also served as the launching of the NMT's project. It ended with the election of ad hoc committee members tasked to study the possibility of setting up a Federation of Pedicab Drivers and Operators' Associations. The ad hoc committee members all came from the Pedicab Drivers' Associations in Navotas, Caloocan and Malabon. More than three thousand pedicabs ply the short distance routes in these three cities.

All major television networks in Metro Manila i.e., ABS-CBN Channel 2, GMA 7, ABC 5, RPN 9, and IBC 13, radio networks and newspaper dailies, including the Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Malaya, and Balita (tabloid in Filipino) covered the event. Dr. Canila, the guest speakers and leaders were individually interviewed live over the radio (DZMM) on the day of the event. DZMM is one of the country's leading AM news radio network nationwide.

News about the forum was carried by the four most popular free TV channels namely:

- ABS-CBN Channel 2 which aired the consultation twice, both on primetime
- GMA Channel 7, which aired it on primetime news
- ABC Channel 5, which aired it once on primetime
- IBC Channel 13, on primetime news



The Journal Group of Companies which publishes the country's three most widely read tabloids carried an editorial on NMT on the February 12 issue of all three tabloids. The editorial came out, both in English and Filipino. (Please see the *Editorial: Pedals Anyone?* on page 25).

Based on the results and learnings from the First Consultation on NMT, the FILCONWILL crafted clearer multiple strategies to popularize Non-Motorized Transportation (NMT). These multiple interlinked strategies include research, advocacy addressed to the public, policy makers and media, networking and organizational development among different sectors supportive of NMT.

Further the FILCONWILL realized as a result of the consultation to focus on the pedicab subsector as the first priority for a number of reasons, among them are:

- It serves as a mode of public transportation for low-income groups
- It provides a source of livelihood, though minimal to otherwise jobless males of productive age. It even provides income to individuals who are physically challenged and are therefore "not employable"
- It belongs to the informal sector with no or little social, political protection
- Pedicabs are fit and practical for people commuting to short distance travel in commercial centers, from their residence to nearby schools, church, parks and tourist areas.



Research

The research activities focused on two levels - national and local.

A review of documents revealed two trends in terms of policies:

1. At the national level, there is a general lack of policies supportive, promotive of walking and non-motorized transportation, specifically cycling.
2. At the local (or Local Government Unit, LGU) level, the city or municipal ordinances or resolutions are regulatory in nature, and are not promotive of non-motorized transport.

National policies

Up to this date, Metro Manila residents consider traffic congestion and air pollution as their first and second problem, respectively, in their pursuit for quality of life.

One viable alternative solution to reduce these problems is the non-motorized transport component, integrated into the transportation strategy of the country, both in urban and rural settings.

Despite these realities, the Philippines still lack a comprehensive national policy supportive and promotive of non-motorized transport. Further, there is no policy that integrates non-motorized transport into the national infrastructure/transportation development framework. Even the country's Air Quality Improvement Program does not address non-motorized transport.

National agencies have sponsored transport mode-specific policies and plans, with limited regard for developing an integrated, intermodal transport system, including train, buses, tricycles, bicycles and pedicabs.

The lack of policies and physical structure have dictated the general behavior of residents, most especially Metro Manila residents to take cars, jeeps, trains or tricycles to their destinations even for short distance travels.

A World Bank report in 2001 indicated that 22% of car journeys and 32% of jeepney journeys in Metro Manila are less than 2 kilometers in distance. Many of these short trips, that could have been reached by walking or cycling, are on the main arterial network. These short trips are one of the major contributors to traffic congestion.

Bicycle trips compose about 2% of all trips in less congested outer areas of Metro Manila, such as the City of Marikina. But this mode of transportation would likely disappear due to an increasing number of motorized vehicles, if the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Marikina would not do any measure. This has already happened in other parts of Metro Manila (and in many other Asian metropolises) where an overwhelming traffic displaced bicycles out of the streets, resulting in the loss of a nonpolluting means of transport.

It is commendable to note that the City of Marikina, adjudged as a Healthy City, did not take this development sitting down. It encouraged its residents to bike by building a 30 km bike path linking markets, workplaces and residential areas.

It also provided bicycles to its employees through its Marikina City Bikeways Program. (Please see newspaper article "New Bicycle Lane Opens in Marikina" on page 32).

Marikina leads the v

Marikina City is carving out a 66-kilometer lane from its thoroughfare for the exclusive use of bicycles as an alternative transport to mitigate the effects of surging world oil prices.

Ms. Carlota Contreras, officer-in-charge of the Marikina City Bikeways Office, said the bikeways project began when the Department of Public Works and Highways proposed a pilot component of the Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project for a non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle path in Marikina to connect communities with employment centers and Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations.

Besides saving on fare transport, bike riding is also good for one's health, particularly on the heart, Marikina officials led by Mayor Marites Fernando said.

"This non-motorized transport component includes a network of about 66 kilometers of bikeways, 50 kms of which will be developed along existing roads and 16 kms of bikeways along the Marikina river banks," Contreras said.

Local officials in the metropo-



OFF TO SCHOOL. Marikina students are now using bicycles in going to school, helping to offset the continuing rise in bus, jeepney and tricycle fares and the spike in diesel. The Marikina government has allocated 66 kilometers of bikeways funded by the World Bank. The city was the first to put up bike lanes. (Photos by [unreadable])

Conflicting and confusing national policies and actions

While the World Bank report in 2001 mentions that the government then endorsed NMT as a national priority, the government's position on NMT utilization has been conflicting.

Here are some real-life examples of the barriers to the utilization of NMT in the Philippines.

- This is exemplified by the government actions through the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), which keeps on harassing pedicab drivers and operators.

This conflict emanates from *MMDA Resolution No. 02-40, Series of 2002*, that prohibits acts such as selling goods and services, installing temporary or permanent structures in the street sidewalk in Metro Manila. It also gives authority to MMDA to confiscate items to "clear the sidewalks, streets, avenues, alleys, bridges, parks and other public places in Metro Manila of all illegal structures and obstructions."

Unfortunately, this Resolution is being interpreted by the MMDA agents to include pedicab transport operations.

On April 23, 2005, MMDA agents conducted a clearing operation in the City of Manila violently confiscating pedicabs. In the melee, an MMDA agent allegedly shot a pedicab driver and killed a bystander. The agent was later arrested.

- In another development in 2005, the national government opened a 10-km Metro Walk and Pedal Ways in one of the busy main roads in Quezon City. Quezon City, adjacent to Marikina City, is one of the 14 cities in Metro Manila. The walk/pedal ways is part of a 200 km Metro Walk and Pedal Ways within the Metropolis. This is a very expensive 362 million peso project (US\$6.6M).

However, this may not be enough, if there is no integration strategy of the different modes of transportation, strict regulation of the increasing number of motorized vehicles plying the streets and intense educational campaigns.

It is apparent that the national political leaders are not supportive of integrating the NMT with other modes of transportation.

- The Philippines has ratified the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) and is a cosignatory to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, reflecting its strong commitment to address its contribution to green house gas emissions. But in reality, the government is not serious in regulating the number of motorized vehicles plying the streets.

There are approximately 1.5 million public and private vehicles that pass through Metro Manila roads every day. Though the 1996 survey showed 21% of the trips were made by private care or utility vehicle, it is being predicted that the percentage of private car use will dramatically rise to 34% by 2015. This is worrying considering the fact that even the country's Air Quality Improvement Program does not actively address non-motorized transport.

This has been one of the deterrents to the use of bicycles. The public complains that if they will bike in Metro Manila, they will either get hurt by rushing motorized vehicles, or they will die suffocating from the dirty air.



In the provinces, the proliferation of motorized bikes has already been felt by the pedicab drivers and commuters. This is seen as a threat to the thriving and increasing number of bicycles in the provinces.



This is very crucial since motor vehicles have a greater role in increasing the greenhouse gas effect. Thus reversing the mode of transportation to less polluting and nonpolluting modes should be an important objective of the country's development plan.

And it has not been that way.

Policies of the Local Government Units

Local Government Units or LGUs are autonomous to a certain extent when it comes to governing their localities. By virtue of a resolution or ordinance or executive order, they have the authority to manage their transportation system.

However, FILCONWILL noticed differences in the resolutions of different LGUs concerning non-motorized transportation, among them are:

- a. General objectives of the resolution/ordinances
- b. Amount for the permits/licenses to operate pedicabs
- c. Presence/absence of social protection of the pedicab drivers/operators such as health insurance, etc.
- d. Presence/absence of infrastructures, structures of routing to maximize utilization of non-motorized transportation.

Policies of the LGUs in Metro Manila

Metro Manila is composed of contiguous 14 Cities and 3 Municipalities. Each one has its own policy regarding how to manage and regulate its transportation and traffic management system. Each City/Municipality is governed by a council and the local chief executives.

The contradictions in the policies are on two levels:

- First is the policy contradiction between that of the MMDA's and the Metro Manila LGUs. The MMDA is not under these LGUs but is directly under the Office of the President. As exemplified in Conflicting national policies and actions on page 11 , the MMDA resolutions do not compliment nor harmonize with the Metro Manila LGU resolutions concerning non-motorized transport.
The Metro Manila LGUs, even in the absence of a policy that recognizes the role of NMT in the transportation sector, are tolerant of the pedicabs plying the streets. As long as they do not encroach into the main highways for safety reasons. However, the MMDA do not tolerate the pedicabs as shown in its efforts to clear the streets of pedicabs. This is a problem area because the MMDA is supposed to be the lead coordinating agency concerning traffic in the metropolis.
- The policies between the neighboring LGUs do not harmonize. The City of Manila designates terminals for non-motorized and motorized vehicles. Whereas, its neighbors, Cities of Malabon and Kalookan do not.

So far, it is the City of Marikina that has shown its commitment to NMT with its Bikeways Project. It has already built a bike lane and will expand it to 66 km. This biking lane is strategically built linking residential areas to centers of human activities such as schools, church, park. It has shown its planning capability to integrate the NMT with the other modes of transportations.

Policies of the LGUs in the provinces

From May to December, the FILCONWILL did a policy research in 4 provinces namely, Southern Leyte, Northern Leyte, Biliran and Western Samar.

All of the ordinances/resolutions on NMT in the four provinces:



- Are stand alone policies concerning only the pedicabs
- Do not deal with a transport development plan
- Are all regulatory in nature, stating the amount of fees to be collected either or both for the driver's license or/and registration fee, expected behavior of the drivers, traffic rules
- Have different licensing and registration fees even among

contiguous municipalities similar to Metro Manila

- Do not recognize the NMT as a viable, sustainable, economical mode of transportation
- Do not contain any infrastructural changes in road condition to ensure that the NMT riders are safe

Because each mode of transportation is contained or regulated by a stand alone policy, there is no integration of the different modes of transportation at the policy level. This is exemplified by the town of Palompon, Northern Leyte. In reality, it has the best example of how to popularize the NMT but it is not reflected in its policies.

Of the different places that were visited, Palompon stand out for a variety of reasons:

- The LGU of Palompon created a Civil Security Office, and one of its tasks is the traffic management and coordination with the different organizations of drivers and operators of pedicab, and motorized transportation.
- Only pedicabs are allowed to get passengers along the major thoroughfare in the town proper linking the municipal hall, pier, terminal for the motorized transport, church, park, market, cooperative office, etc. The different modes of motorized transportation are relegated for long distance travels.
- The number of pedicabs are thrice as much as the motorized tricycles and motorcycles
- Segregated terminal for the different modes of transportation whereby the pedicabs link these terminals to major centers of human activities and residential houses.

These structures favoring the maximization of pedicab use by the public are also exemplified by 3 other neighboring municipalities.

However, only one municipality requires its pedicab drivers to enroll with the country's Social Security System.

Extent of utilization of pedicabs

A total of four cities (Tacloban, Ormoc, Maasin and Catbalogan) and 55 municipalities were visited for this research.



Only Ormoc City, satellite City of Northern Leyte doesn't allow pedicabs to ply along its streets. Tacloban City, capital city of Northern Leyte doesn't allow pedicabs in major streets but tolerates their presence in residential areas. Both Maasin City, capital of Southern Leyte and Catbalogan City, capital of Western Samar do not restrict the pedicabs from plying the major routes.

The following tables show the approximate number of pedicabs in the four provinces. This number should not be taken as absolutely correct because the registered number may not represent the actual figure. On the one hand, the pedicabs and operators may not reveal the actual count for fear of reprisal from the authorities.

Table 1 shows the approximate number of pedicabs plying in the four provinces. The government doesn't require registration of the bicycles. Therefore it is not possible, at this point in time to get the number of NMT. Out of 24,697 pedicabs, 18.75% is in the four cities (Table 2). The rest are providing services in the municipalities.

Table 1. Approximate No. of Pedicabs in the Four Provinces

Province	No. of pedicabs
Biliran	911
Northern Leyte	17,186
Southern Leyte	600
Western Samar	6,000
TOTAL	24,697

Table 2. Approximate No. of Pedicabs in the Four Cities

CITY	Province	No. of pedicabs
Ormoc City	Northern Leyte	None
Tacloban City	Northern Leyte	2,000
Maasin City	Southern Leyte	130
Catbalogan City	Western Samar	2,500
TOTAL		4,630

In short, there are unregistered or unaccounted pedicabs because they are not formally recognized as a viable sector. This number does not mean anything however. It will have a meaning if it is the same as or greater than the number of public motorized vehicles. It will have further meaning if they are recognized as a transport sector contributing to the economic growth, efficiency of the traffic management, environmental health and livability of the community.



However, the active marketing campaign of traders selling motorbikes all over the country competes with the NMT. Sellers of motorbikes are present in almost all towns that were visited for this research. They are marketing these motorbikes as a cheap and economical alternative to owning cars, etc. With a cheap price at US\$80 for the first payment and a monthly installment payment of US\$35 for two years, owning a motorbike is more attractive for Filipinos than owning a pedicab, seen as a poor man's transportation.

Pedicab drivers and commuters have felt their presence as a major threat to the utilization of NMT.

Based on the research and visits done in the municipalities in the 4 provinces, the following has been observed:

- It is becoming obvious that there is a growing number of pedicabs, signifying an increasing utilization of this mode by the riding public, most especially in the provinces.
- Pedicabs contribute to public mobility especially in areas that are fast becoming urbanized
- The pedicab transport provides economic livelihood for unemployed but productive age group
- There are factors that favor the proliferation/popularization of pedicabs, among them are:
 1. the interplay of the economic activity of the place, policy structure, supportive political leaders and planners of the locality
 2. Geographical location of the place and plain level of road lay out that facilitates movement of pedaled vehicles
 3. Regulation of the number of motorized public transportation
 4. Inter modal strategy where the pedicabs are given their own parking/terminal area nearest to the terminal of the motorized mode of transportation



5. Elimination of competition with motorized mode of transportation for short distance travels and within areas/centers of human activities by designating the motorized mode to long distance travels and hard-to-reach areas only.

Networking

The FILCONWIL has networked with the following groups in Metro Manila and the 4 provinces:

- Bikers who are health and sports health enthusiasts
- Bikers who are laborers/workers
- Bikers who belong to the policy making group
- Bikers who take NMT as a means of public transportation
- Small scale, backyard industry owners who manufacture the pedicabs

FILCONWILL supported two biking inter-town races as a part of its advocacy. The first was in Palo, Leyte on October 16 and the second was in Hilongos, Leyte on December 19.



FILCONWLL took advantage the two races by advocating to the public the benefits of NMT. It distributed leaflets, streamers and banners.

There have been an ocular visit to Cebu and Iloilo island provinces. Both are largely rural provinces in the Southern part of the Philippine archipelago. But both have shown fast trend in urbanization and subsequently transportation problems.

The Pedicab Industry

FILCONWILL networked with the different backyard pedicab manufacturing industry. A total of 12 backyard industry sites welding pedicabs in two provinces were visited. There are only two localities, Calbayog in Samar and Carigara in Northern Leyte that supply the pedicabs in the four provinces.



FILCONWILL studied the different designs of pedicabs utilized in different municipalities. One possible support that is being thought of is the establishment backyard industries in other parts of the provinces to spur the production of more pedicabs.

Establishment and Strengthening of Federation, Organizations, Cooperatives

KASAMPADYAK

The FILCONWIL facilitated the establishment of the federation composed of several pedicab drivers and operators' associations in Quezon City, Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela.

FILCONWILL facilitated a series of meetings with the leaders of these associations from February onwards, after the first consultation meeting.

On April 6, 2005, the federation called, KASAMPADYAK, was finally registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

KASAMPADYAK is an acronym for Katipunan ng mga Samahang de Padyak para sa Adhikang Kaunlaran. It literally means the Federation of Pedicab Drivers, Operators' Associations for Progress.

With the establishment of the Federation of Pedicab Drivers in Malabon, Navotas, Novaliches and Caloocan, 13 leaders underwent a series of workshop discussions on the directions of the Federation.

The main training was held on July 23 - 24, 2005. The topics of the leadership workshop consisted of several modules:

1. organizational development (federation and city-wide organization),
2. in-depth analysis of the transportation sector and the pedicab sub-sector
3. Planning

PADYAK

PADYAK (Pari, Pamayanan para sa Dukha, Aksyon at Kapayapaan) was launched, as an organization with James Auste (Bike for Life), Fr. Picx Picardal (Bike for Peace) and Fr. Roberto P. Reyes (Running Peace) on July 7, 2005, through a run-bike-trek from the Manila Cathedral to the World Trade Center on the occasion of a National Retreat for Priests, with the participation of Senator Pia Cayetano.

Cooperative in Sogod

One of the things that the FILCONWILL advocated to associations of pedicab drivers and operators is the formation of cooperatives. One such initiative is in Sogod where the FILCONWILL piloted the establishment of the Sogod Pedicab Drivers' Cooperative by providing a brand new pedicab as a seed capital for their cooperative.

This is still in its infancy and nothing can be deduced from the experiences as of this reporting period.

ADVOCACY

Public Campaigns

BIKERS EXPEDITION With FATHER REYES AND BIKERS

FILCONWILL, together with GOMBURZA organized the 9-day bike-run of Fr. Robert Reyes and Nonoy Jopson, 2003 Enduraman champion. It kicked off in Manila on February 16, 2005 with the presence and support of Senator Pia Cayetano and Congressman Manuel "Way Kurat" Zamora, both biking aficionados. Please see appendix, the article, *9-day Manila-Sagada Bike-Run Launched* on page 26.

In brief ceremonies at the Manila Cathedral area, with journalists witnessing the start of biking expedition, Fr. Reyes chided the unnecessary complications of city life and endorsed "non-motorized transport" as a viable alternative to costly and pollutant-generating fossil fuel.

The biking expedition was also supported by Knights of Columbus.

Please see the appendix, Father Reyes' personal testimony on page 27.

Violent dispersals of pedicab drivers

On April 17, in Manila, pedicabs parked under the Light Railway Transportation in Quirino and Taft Avenues were dispersed and chased by Metro Manila Development Authority operatives.

The MMDA operatives vigorously icepicked the pedicab tires and ransacked the cabs' roof.

Five pedicabs were forcefully picked up and carried away to an MMDA dump truck which headed to an unknown destination. Five pedicab drivers were injured during the operation.

On APRIL 22, the MMDA operatives violently pursued pedicab drivers in Pasay City that caused the death of a bystander while wounding two other pedicab drivers in the chest and in the thigh.

KASAMPADYAK and the FILCONWIL joint the rest of the pedicab drivers/operators' associations in protesting the MMDA actions.

Rally

On June 11, 2005, KASAMPADYAK, FILCONWIL and its network organizations such as GOMBURZA and PADYAK, led a rally along the cities and municipalities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela to support the NMT sector in its clamor from the Local Government Units of these areas to allow them to pick up passengers in centers of human activities or passenger drop off points of buses.

The immediate pressing issue was for the Local Government Unit of Valenzuela City to allow pedicabs in strategic roads.

Policy advocacy

The FILCONWIL, aside from regularly inviting them to the activities, wrote Senator Pia Cayetano and Congressman Zamora to actively advocate for the NMT in both chambers. Both policy makers nodded positively. The results of the research are due for presentation to Congressman Zamora this January. FILCONWILL has already written him about this requesting for his schedule.

Media Advocacy

Even ADB in its article recognized the renewed interest on NMT in 2005. (Please see Appendix, Forum on Bicycles on page 37).

Dr. Canila had 3 radio interviews on February 6. The leaders of KASAMPADYAK were also invited as guests in a radio station twice.

FILCONWILL sent media blurbs and data on NMT to various media institutions. The Metro Manila wide consultation, the 9-day bike run of Fr. Reyes and Athlete champion Nonoy Jopson were media events in February.

These media activities somehow sparked a renewed media interest on the issue. The appendix has some of these articles. One of these articles was an editorial on the advocacy spearheaded by FILCONWILL.

NEXT STEPS

One of the felt needs expressed by the NMT sector is the threat coming from the unregulated cheap motorcycles.

To counter this, FILCONWILL is planning to focus on three things in 2006:

- BIKE for HOPE, a media event where the network of cyclists and pedicab drivers will relay in two provinces, namely Southern and Northern Leyte. The object of the relay is their proposed resolution to be forwarded to Congress and Senate. Congressman Zamora and Fr. Reyes will be invited to accept the resolutions at the end of the relay in a city center, probably Ormoc or Tacloban City.
- Media advocacy, including the above event
- Policy advocacy

The policy advocacy will include the resolutions proposed by the NMT sector as mentioned above.

For the time being, as a result of the policy research, FILCONWILL is already conducting informal discussions with various stakeholders in urban and rural areas, on the general outline of principles for the Framework of the National Policy on Non-Motorized Transportation. This framework contains the following:

- The policy should recognize the NMT as a viable, sustainable, environment friendly mode of transportation, that has an economic return to the communities
- The policy should indicate the significance of having a integrated transport strategy that would integrate the NMT with the over all transportation development plan of the locality, especially in urban areas
- The country should prioritize in its transportation plan the establishment of infrastructures, traffic management systems that will promote the NMT utilization such as biking lanes, biking routes
- The government should ensure the maximization of NMT use by eliminating competition with motorized transportation in areas where NMT is more appropriate such as in short distance routes, pathways linking centers of human activities (i.e. churches, schools, markets, groceries, park, etc.)
- There should be social protection for pedicab drivers and operators.

APPENDIX

1. Editorial: Pedals, anyone?

People's Journal
People's Tonight
People's Taliba
February 12, 2006
www.journal.com.ph

If only for their relative cheapness, energy conservation and non-polluting nature of their operations, and building healthier bodies of pedicab drivers, we support calls for local governments and traffic enforcers to promote non-motorized transportation for short-distance trips.

Pedicabs, unlike motorcycles, also do not produce noise because they have no moving parts. They convey passengers who work late at night to their respective homes quietly, thus posing less irritation to neighbors.

This simple transportation system, ideal for barangays with narrow streets leading to the main arteries or private subdivisions, are also pro-poor because they directly employ family members of less fortunate surrounding communities.

A small operator can start his business with at least three or four units, thereby immediately employing four vacationing or out-of-school youths.

The business can also spawn other allied trades like bike repair and suppliership, small stalls in the "pilahan" (file) of barangays and villages, maybe even give birth to cooperatives which could empower unit owners even more.

These "micro-economic potentials" come to mind as we read about leaders of pedicab drivers associations, cycling organizations, and individual bicycle hobbyists who gathered recently to discuss moves to push for the use of non-motorized transportation in the country.

In a forum hosted last weekend by the *Bilin ng Mamamayang Konsyumer*, BILMAKO (Filipino Consumers' Will), pedicab drivers, cyclists, and biking enthusiasts pressed for greater use of NMT for environmental, economic, health, and practical reasons.

"It is about time that we move to push for the use of non-hazardous, non-toxic, and nonmotorized means of transport," said Dr. Carmelita Canila, president of BILMAKO, convenor of *Adbokasiya Para sa Pambansang Pagtataguyod ng Pedekab, Bisekleta at Iba Pang Transportasyong de-Pedal* (National Advocacy for Pedicab, Bicycles and other Non-motorized Transportation), an advocacy that would seek

recognition of NMT and consequently result in transport policy that would benefit its users.

"NMT" is an economical, people-friendly, health, and timely alternative for Filipinos today," Canila explained, saying that non-motorized vehicles such as pedicabs and bicycles help sustain life in the city. "While motorized vehicles pollute the air, NMTs, do not," she said, adding that apart from being an answer to the pollution problems, NMTs offer health benefit and energy savings.

"We want that pedicabs be legitimized as a means of transportation in short-trips routes. We also want that lanes also be provided for bicycles in routes dominated by motorized vehicles. We want that specific streets be allocated for bicycles. And we want designated biking routes in Metro Manila", Canila added.

The NMT program, she said, hopes to bring forward policy and infrastructure changes favorable to the use of NMT. The NMT program in the country is supported by PATH CANADA through its Non-Motorized Project Promoting Physical Activity Through Infrastructure Changes.

How about it, Sen. Pia Cayetano?

(Note: Senator Pia Cayetano, a first term Senator, is a popular biking enthusiast. She was photographed riding on her bike. The photo was used in her signature campaign poster at the last national elections.)

2. 9-DAY MANILA-SAGADA BIKE-RUN LAUNCHED

PAdYAK, a 9-day bike-run from Manila to Sagada-Baguio kicked off today (Feb.16) led by Fr. Roberto Reyes, known as the "running priest", with support from Senator Pia Cayetano and Congressman Manuel "Way Kurat" Zamora, both biking aficionados, and Nonoy Jopson, 2003 Enduraman champion.

In brief ceremonies this morning at the Manila Cathedral area, Fr. Reyes chided the unnecessary complications of city life and endorsed "non-motorized transport" as a viable alternative to costly and pollutant-generating fossil fuel.

He said PAdYAK (Payak at Dalisay na Buhay Alay sa Kalikasan) addressed three zero targets: zero waste, zero junk and zero toxins. The first refers to simple consumption which does not produce or alternatively recycles garbage. The second seeks avoidance of unhealthy fast foods for the body and pornographic ideas or materials. The third would ban toxic substances principally nicotine, alcohol and drugs.

In front of the Manila Cathedral, the group planted mahogany seedlings donated by the Knights of Columbus, sponsor of the 9-day run along

with BILMAKO Inc. (Bilin ng Mamamayang Konsyumer) and Fr' Reyes' own organization GOMBURZA.

The handful of participants will plant mahogany seedlings at each of the projected nine stops. One of them is Fr. Reyes 81-year-old father, who will ride in a van which carries the group's supplies, bike parts and the mahogany seedlings.

Cong. Zamora announced that Fr. Reyes advocacy of tobacco control has convinced him to stop smoking. He joined the initial run to San Miguel, Bulacan on his own bike with his signature no. 8 plate as congressman.

Sen. Cayetano promised to compete at Cong. Zamora's mountain bike race in Mindanao in November. She joined the first kilometer run through Metro Manila before running off to another athletic event involving women. She said later in the day she was going to the U.S. She greeted the two "birthday boys". It is Jopson's 30th birthday on the first day of the bike-run and Fr. Reyes' 50th on the 9th day.

In the wake of the terrorist bombing last Monday. Fr. Reyes also said he was dedicating this run to peace. An author, Fr. Reyes has published a book titled "Running Peace."

The group reaches Baguio in time for the city's annual flower festival PANAGBENGA and the anniversary of the non-violent EDSA Revolution.

3. A Call for Genuine Environmentalism in Government & Sustainability of Lifestyle

"He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick -- no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic.

"He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them.'"

Mark 6:8-11

Simplifying and cleansing are among the tasks to which a priest is called and I have derived inspiration from the simplicity that is the legacy of priests who have gone ahead of me. Father Romy Azusano was a Dominican priest, a missionary to the poor in Dagat-dagatan who knew the meaning of PAYAK (simple) and lived the simple life. The bicycle was his means of transport and he was biking to the convent when he

was stopped by thieves, divested of camera, mobile phone and bike, then stabbed to death on June 12, 2004.

Be Prepared (Laging Handa) is a scouting motto and priests are scouts who are called upon to simplify and consistently follow Jesus as their scout master. This is what Mark has written about. The journey is far and treacherous and the barest survival kit should be enough. Aside from wearing helmets and reflectorized vests, anything else is excess luggage and a liability to the mission our Master has asked us to undertake.

We ask ourselves, reflecting on the circumstances of Fr. Azusano's death, if he were driving a car, could he have been stabbed? We mourn the violent death of Father Azusano and of other holy and committed priests who have been martyred in recent years: Fr Pedro Alingal, S.J. and Fr. Neri Satur in Bukidnon; Fr. Tulio Favali in Butuan; Fr. Inocencio OMI-Marawi; Fr. Rudy Romano Csr-Cebu; Fr. Rufus Halley OSC-Cagayan de Oro; Fr. Giuseppe Pierantoni and Fr. Rhoel Gallardo CMF-Basilan.

More recently, Fr. Charlito "Cha" Melendres was trying to save parishioners of Barangay Banugao when he was swept away by angry waters rushing down a Sierra Madre badly denuded by logging. He was another bright light in a horizon rendered colorless and tasteless and gloomy by spreading greed, corruption and apathy. But a bigger net may well have been cast with the over 165,000 recorded dead--perhaps the worst disaster of our time--by giant waves hitting the shores of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Africa, Maldives and the Seychelles. They were martyrs for the environment, offered on the altar of modernity, a toll paid for the world's indifference and reckless living.

PAdYAK¹ means Payak at Dalisay na Buhay Alay sa Kalikasan.

Simplicity (Kapayakan) because no more than a pair of running feet and a bike are needed to negotiate any distance and to achieve Purity (Kadalisayan) in the face of a materialist and consumerist orientation, addiction, greed, corruption, and compromise, and unsustainable because irresponsible lifestyles.

The lowly bike was used by Fr. Picx Picardal March 26 to April 15, 2000 to campaign for Peace from Davao to Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte. A cancer survivor, James Auste, used the same means of transport in his Bike for Life from Manila to Cebu June 4 - 19, 2000 and Manila to Aparri, Pagudpod to Manila September 1-15, 2002, in order to raise funds for children afflicted with cancer. Running on foot, Joy Roxas is the first Filipina to traverse the archipelago last month.

¹ Padyak, in Tagalog, literally means to pedal a bike.

From February 16-24, 2005, Nonoy Jopson and I will bike-run 100 kilometers a day to get from Manila to Sagada and Sagada to Baguio. We look to our lowly running shoes and bikes as the means to simplify and sanctify our lives and begin a journey of Solidarity with Filipinos fighting for the Integrity of Creation (Nature) and Peace.

Equally PAdYAK means for us a critique of contradictory and unsustainable government policies on logging and mining. A Total Ban on the extraction of logs and ores is the only valid goal in our time, not just after a tragic disaster and not just for reasons consistent with one version of the Constitution.

In the task of simplification, we commit ourselves to the use of less energy, less fossil fuel, to less dependence on electrical appliances, through learning conservation, through walking, running or biking as much to places of work as to leisure, to church as well as school, and through tropics-friendly designs.

We commit ourselves to desist from using consumer products which involve the slaughter of whales, sharks, crocodiles and other endangered species; or which have issued from the sweat shops of China, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, etc.

To develop a desirable level of food security, we propose to practice urban farming; to help out in the renewal and rehabilitation of environmentally damaged areas; to reach outward to places which have been stressed by calamity or scarcity.

And to develop a genuinely healthy orientation, we will avoid malls and spend more time with our families outdoors.

In the task of purification, we shall avoid addictive substances like alcohol, nicotine and drugs; reduce beef consumption understanding that it results to the expansion of grazing grounds at the expense of the forest; to cook health food and shun fast foods and restaurants that charge less for otherwise excessive consumption; to farm in the city; to promote gardens and parks and advocate clean pure air; to recycle and transform garbage and aim for zero-waste; to value silence and meditation and curtail noise pollution; and to put a premium on genuine industry and work ethos by rejecting all forms of gambling and seduction by get rich quick scams and schemes.

We express our solidarity with the world's spiritual leaders and pray that they might prevail over the tendency to do violence to the integrity of their faith.

Fr. Roberto P. Reyes
GOMBURZA
February 16, 2005

4. **Dacawi: Environmental woes**

By Ramon Dacawi

Sun Star Baguio
Monday, March 07, 2005

BANAUE, the once scenic town of now endangered and crumbling rice terraces, throws its garbage into a ravine up at Mt. Polis, its common watershed with Mt. Province. Bontoc, the old capital of Mt. Province at the other side of the mount, finds it more convenient to dump its own into the Chico River that flows to Kalinga and the Cagayan Valley.

I imagine kids of Tocucan barangay down river would wade and dive into their part of the Chico, only to shoot out of the water, gasping for breath and scampering away, unnerved by sight of plastic snagged on rocks on the river bed. I wonder what the minnows and crabs, if there are any left, think of their multi-colored, contaminated water world.

Unless Banaue acts, water would eventually wash down its mounting garbage to the rice terraces of its neighboring town of Hungduan which, for centuries, depended on Mt. Polis for its irrigation water.

Baguio continues to grapple with its own mounting refuse to finally prevent folks in Tuba, Benguet from being at the receiving end of rusting tin cans, stench and all. La Trinidad, Benguet's capital town, has seen fit to skip its strawberry festival this summer and concentrate on making its waste disposal system functional.

Like many of the other localities in the country, we are courting environmental disaster up here in the Cordillera, even if among us, we dismiss such thought as rubbish. What we can't sweep under the rug, outsiders see and tell us, as did Fr. Robert Reyes and Nonoy Jopson did.

The running priest and the eldest son of the late revolutionary Edgar Jopson told us what they saw at the end of their nine-day Padyak (payak at dalisay na buhay alay sa kalikasan) run-and-bike trek last month. The two started out from the Manila Cathedral last Feb. 16, Nonoy's 30th birthday, and ended up here in Baguio on Feb. 24, Fr. Reyes' 50th.

We tend to listen more to outsiders looking in than our own. All I could say to Fr. Reyes and Nonoy was the hope that their grueling run would help convince us to put our acts together and start cleaning up our mess.

Fr. Reyes was sad to find that the Bontoc-Banaue Road that snakes up and down Mt. Polis has turned into a string of gravel quarries that undermine the stability of the erosion-prone route. The feeling is mutual, I almost blurted out.

Ifugao and Mt. Province officials had accused each other of tolerating

their respective constituents in the continuous assault on the imperiled watershed. The exchange arose during attempts at negotiations to resolve the feud over where the political boundary line should be drawn on top of the mountain.

Settling the boundary dispute may help ease the tension, but that focus brings the cart before the horse. The battle over political turf has diverted the paramount issue. While the wrangling is on, denudation continues. Sooner or later, the common watershed might dry up, and there would be nothing left to quarrel about, nothing really settled except which part of the wasted resource should belong to which province.

Like our unmanaged garbage, nature respects no political boundaries. That's obvious, of course. The water that flows out of Mt. Polis, forming the rivulets, springs, streams and rivers, serves those where it naturally flows. We can divert the flow, piping it in for our own and leaving the others upstream dry, or move political boundaries to legalize our dominion over the resource, unmindful that in doing so, we are eroding the traditional time-honored system of sustainable resource ownership and sharing.

Let me digress. One of the two cellular phone giants triggered the renewed boundary dispute when it set up its communications tower at Mt. Polis. Villagers of Bayyo barangay in Bontoc were smarting when Banaue issued the permit, claiming the tower was actually installed on Bayyo ground. Officials of Hungduan town in Ifugao also entered the fray, swearing the structure stands on a part of its barangay of Lubuong.

Before that, a giant statue of the Blessed Virgin was installed on the mount, for Mother Mary to bless passersby and the surrounding villages. To some officials, the figure looks more like a survey marker, a reference point on which to draw the political line rather than to draw spiritual inspiration from.

Fr. Reyes and Nonoy had no time to cycle or run up Manhoyohoy in the border of once remote Tinoc town of Ifugao and the vegetable terraces of Buguias, Benguet. Home of the gentle Kalanguya or Ikalahan tribe, Tinoc, until recently, had the unusual distinction of being the only town in the country with no road at all to link it to the outside world. It also had the unenviable status of having an airstrip, used by religious missionaries.

Several years ago, a road was finally driven, allowing a bus line to open the route. In no time, rich farmers, mostly from the outside, came in with their bulldozers that stripped bare the mossy forest towards Tinoc, converting these into farmlands. Material acquisitiveness also respects no political or tribal boundaries.

As a whole, the Cordillera region serves as the watershed cradle of Northern Luzon and a vital resource base for national development. Its

water, the lifeblood of the lowland rice lands, used to run the turbines of the Binga and Ambuklao dams, as it does the Magat and the newly-functional San Roque in Pangasinan. Its mineral wealth has been practically mined out and, having learned from the past, the natives in Benguet are up in protest against new explorations towards mining more.

The Binga and Ambuklao are on their death throes, years after native Ibalois were displaced, their ancestral lands submerged for the needed hydroelectric power to run industries, light up and air-condition homes in Metro-Manila. Until now, villages near the power source have yet to be the comfort that "electricity generated within their backyard provides. Mining firms, which brought out the gold and paid their taxes in Makati, now continue to cling to their rights over the lands covered by their mining permits, blocking villagers' effort to title portions which they had "squatted" on for years and years.

I guess I'm getting angry again over the fact that despite giving up its natural wealth, the Cordillera continues to wallow in poverty with all of its six provinces belonging to the so-called Club 20 of the country's poorest. That reality has been told and retold, but given the user-friendly orientation of development, who down there listens?

Some do care. They blame us for up here when they get flooded or silted down there. They chastise us for being selfish when we protest against new mines and dams to be developed for national recovery and development.

With lack of an incentive policy to plow back the benefits derived from the exploitation of Cordillera resource, it's rather difficult to blame Banaue or Bontoc for failing to come up with a sound garbage disposal system.

5. New bicycle lane opens in Marikina

First posted 11:46pm (Mla time) June 27, 2005
By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.
Inquirer News Service

Editor's Note: Published on page A15 of the June 28, 2005 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer

FINDING the price of oil too high? Get a bicycle, especially if you live in Marikina City.

The city inaugurates Tuesday a new 377-meter bicycle lane in Barangay Sto. Niño, connecting Sumulong Highway and the Katipunan Access Road near Cainta, Rizal.

The P3-million project funded by the World Bank has brought the entire length of bike lanes in Marikina City to 29.77 kilometers, the city public information office said.

The almost 30-km bicycle lane links markets, workplaces and residential areas. The new bike lane that ends in the Katipunan Access Road is connected to the existing bike lane from Barangay Concepcion Dos, passing through Parang Area and ending in Barangay Fortune, where many factories are located.

The city government hopes to add 16 km more to the bike lane this year. The project is part of the Marikina City Bikeways Program which aims to build a 66-km bike lane to promote the use of bikes as a means of transportation.

The city government, which earlier handed over 150 mountain bikes for barangay watchmen through its Bantay Bayan program, will also hand over bikes to Barangay Sto. Niño.

Bikes will not only save motorists money, but will also keep them physically fit and lessen air pollution.

The city encourages its residents to use bicycles. Apart from training residents to bike, the city also has a bicycle loan project. Employees and students can obtain a loan payable in one year to buy bikes.

The bikeways program was started by former city mayor and now Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando.

6. Pinoy Kasi : Biking by the bay

First posted 00:33am (Mla time) July 06, 2005

By Michael Tan
Inquirer News Service

Editor's Note: Published on Page A13 of the July 6, 2005 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer

CLOUDS toned down the sunset last Saturday at Manila Bay, but even if it had been in its full splendor, I would have been too exhausted to appreciate it. I had spent an afternoon with nearly-one-year-old Yna, who insisted on doing archaeology, digging up grass and pebbles and shells ... and tasting the artifacts.

Jepoy eventually arrived to rescue me. As I handed Yna to him, I told him I was wiped out, hoping to gain some sympathy, and a quick trip home. Instead, he suggested we go biking.

Cultural biking

I told him he was crazy, but Jepoy insisted, arguing that he wanted to take me on another one of those tours of his world. He loves the Baywalk and other places I go to, but sometimes describes them as "burgis" [bourgeois] He's right about the Baywalk: an afternoon out with the family can cost a few hundred pesos even for light snacks.

But Jepoy doesn't mean bourgeois in terms of expenses alone; instead, he says it to mean that while burgis areas are fun, the more "masa" [for the masses] places are even more enjoyable. And many times, he's proven himself right, from walks through "Little Baguio" (an area in Quezon City with a large community from the Cordilleras) to the explorations of Quiapo's alleyways (and I don't mean the DVD places alone).

Jepoy was, of course, right about our coming from different worlds. I would go to the Cultural Center for concerts, plays and exhibits but Jepoy has never been into the Cultural Center building, and isn't too keen about going. Culture with a big C isn't his bag; for him, and I suspect for many Filipinos, the Cultural Center is a place for leisurely promenades ... and biking, with relatives, even the whole clan. Once when Jepoy told me he'd brought his grandmother as well, I was incredulous, but he insisted the biking place was for all ages.

No lone riders

As usual, Jepoy got his way despite my protests: "Look, Yna's really sleepy." But as we approached the bike park, she perked up almost as if she had gotten a quick recharge from the noise levels that were building up. And as we got out of the car, she became even more animated. Yna loves people and here they were, lots of them, young and old.

There were the usual food vendors offering everything from "pusit" [squid] to "balut" [boiled duck's embryo] (to strengthen the knees for biking, I presume). The food stalls were clean; even the cat sleeping away in one of the kiosks seemed to have taken a bath.

And there was the biking, but I quickly realized it was a different kind of biking than you'd see in the West. The bikes here were all for rent. There were small bicycles for children, some with trainer wheels to help the novices. There were also slightly larger bikes, which in the West are really intended for pre-teens but which we call adult bikes here.

But what struck me immediately was that there were few lone bikers. In the same way a Filipino does not dine or drink or sleep alone, I realized biking is a social activity in the Philippines, something you do with hordes of friends and relatives.

It probably makes sense. First, one has to learn to bike, and that's a social activity, except that Filipino-style, you don't have one teacher. You can see that at the Cultural Center, with kids at different stages of learning to bike. Some had an older relative

pushing the bike from behind with the rest of the clan assuring the child all would be fine. Others had become more confident, biking around gingerly while the relatives cheered them on. Finally, you had the ones who had mastered the bicycle, speeding along and threatening to crash into the food stalls while the mother or grandmother would holler, "'Ingat, ingat' [Careful, careful]!"

Social biking

Besides the "practice biking," there was a lot of what I'd call social biking. People would rent a bike and then take turns using it. Sometimes, you'd see a bike taking a driver plus one or two passengers (I'm amazed at how our small Pinoy bikes can take so many people but then in parts of Mindanao, you have Skylabs: motorcycles that transport four passengers at a time).

For the most part though, social biking at the Cultural Center is best done on sidecars and go-karts, modified bikes with an attached seat for several passengers. These bikes offer all kinds of possible social interactions, usually a younger person biking, with several family members as passengers. There's a sense of importance here as a young boy or girl becomes the family driver, almost as if to say, "Hey you taught me to bike; now I'm going to drive you around." It's on these sidecars and go-karts that a child displays "kuya" [elder brother] or "ate" [elder sister] prowess, assuring the younger passengers, "I'm taking you places."

Other kids have older relatives as passengers ... and now, I could believe Jepoy seeing a kid, who couldn't have been more than 10 years old, asking her passenger, sitting regally in the sidecar: "Saan tayo, Lola [Where to, grandmother]?"

Strangely, but not surprisingly, there were more adult women -- mothers, aunts and grandmothers -- than men. The women weren't there to be biked around; they were also the ones teaching the young ones to bike. I've asked the question before, and I'm asking it again: Where have all the fathers gone?

Bike therapy

"You can forget your problems here," Jepoy explained. I could see why: There's something about biking that, pardon the cliché, uplifts the spirit, whether you're the actual biker, or a spectator. Even Yna seemed totally mesmerized just watching.

I wondered what was running in her head and whispered, "It won't be long before you go biking, too." Then I remembered my own childhood experiences with biking: the awkwardness and uncertainty that accompanied the first attempts to bike, the growing confidence as I learned to balance myself, and the feeling of exhilaration and accomplishment once I could bike on my own. The riding experience itself varied, depending on whether you're riding against, or with the wind, whether you're on level ground or going down or up a hill.

I thought it would be great if the Cultural Center could provide some variations on the terrain so people can bike "uphill" or "downhill" but then again, it's the social biking that seems to appeal most to the families that gather here, a time to unwind, to set aside problems.

Biking as therapy? Why not? But there are probably limits. As I went around asking about the rental rates, I realized this wasn't quite a "for-the-masses" activity. The cheapest kiddie bikes cost P20 an hour while the go-karts and sidecars went for P50.

Jepoy feigned shock when told about the rate for the go-kart, protesting in Tagalog: "It was P30 before. Have you been affected by expanded VAT?"

She laughed and said no, there was no value-added tax (VAT) on rentals and offered us a bike for P40. But the reference to VAT seemed to have touched a raw nerve, the vendor saying, "Grabe ang VAT na 'yan [That VAT is too much]."

7. Secondary roads eyed for bike, pedestrian lanes

First posted 11:46pm (Mla time) Aug 18, 2005

By Tarra V. Quismundo
Inquirer News Service

Editor's Note: Published on page A22 of the August 19, 2005 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer

SECONDARY roads in Metro Manila would play a primary role if and when plans for the creation of bicycle and pedestrian lanes push through.

"We are looking at using secondary, smaller roads. These could be two-way roads. Motorized vehicles will not be allowed there... if that's possible. That's the ideal," said Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

Edsa not included

"Let's not include major thoroughfares like Edsa anymore. That's going to be too dangerous," he continued.

As a long-term solution to rising oil prices, MMDA formally introduced its foot and bike lanes project to the Metro Manila Council, which groups mayors in the National Capital Region.

The Metro Walk and Pedal Ways project is aimed at providing safe passageways for pedestrians and bicycle users in the metropolis.

Fernando said the project could also reduce traffic on Metro Manila roads, where roughly 1.5 million public and private vehicles pass through everyday.

Based on plans prepared by the technical working group from the MMDA's planning office, about P362.5-million will be needed to pave, paint and mark a 200-kilometer network of pedestrian and bike lanes.

The cost will include signages to be put up in the 17 cities and municipalities of Metro Manila.

The concept will entail the closing and allocation of secondary roads "for exclusive use of pedestrians and bikers."

Roads will be divided into four 1.75-meter lanes, with two lanes each for bicycles and pedestrians going on opposite directions.

Two small towns

"There could be places though like Pateros and Navotas, where the streets are too small, and we might not be able to do that [close off roads]. But we will look at it, the hardest [thing to do] is to find the way, the network," said Fernando.

Construction would be done in phases, starting with a P5-million pilot for foot and pedal lanes in two yet to be identified cities before the end of the year.

In the next two years, the MMDA would pave 100 km of walk and bike ways throughout Metro Manila. From 2009 to 2010, the bike lanes would be extended further by 98 more kilometers.

8. Forum on Improving Pedestrian Facilities and Bikeways in Metro Manila

6 September 2005, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines

The promotion of cycling and improved pedestrian access has resurfaced in Metro Manila in the past month.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has announced plans to create a network of bikeways and footpaths in the metropolis. Other local government units have already adopted initiatives in improving pedestrian facilities in some areas, such as Makati City which together with Ayala Land Inc. developed a network of elevated walkways and Manila City which closed some roads, such as Avenida Street, in favor of pedestrians. A comprehensive bikeway network has also been constructed in Marikina City and which is planned for expansion over the next years.

Improving bike and walk ways is expected to result in a reduction of private car use and entice private car users to shift to public transport. Reducing the use of private cars and increasing the public transport patronage will help reduce fuel consumption, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve air quality.

Objective

The objectives of the forum were to review past experiences in promoting walking and cycling in Metro Manila and to disseminate and discuss new plans to provide additional bikeways and improve pedestrian facilities in the metropolis. By bringing stakeholders together from different sectors they will be encouraged to participate and contribute to the implementation of these plans.

This forum is intended to be an initial step towards a continued dialogue between all stakeholders of non-motorized transportation.

The forum was able to successfully bring together about 80 attendees representing the public and private sectors, academe, cycling organizations, media, and other civil society organizations.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Representative delivered the opening speech and expressed ADB's interest in supporting and promoting sustainable urban transportation. CAI-Asia presented key examples and experience of other countries on integrating cycling and walking in urban transportation planning, which can serve as vital inputs to the planned MMDA project. The Metro Padyakan (Bike and Walk Ways) Project presentation of the MMDA focused on the technical details of the project. It showed various bike lane configurations being considered for the study.

The local experience and needs of bicycle commuters were clearly presented by the Firefly Brigade (insert website address). It showed that some technical considerations need to be integrated into the over-all Metro Padyakan project in order to enable people to comfortably commute using their bikes in Manila.

The University of the Philippines' Bikeway Plan for implementation in January 2006 was likewise presented. This plan will be incorporated into the university's comprehensive transportation demand management plan being developed by the National Center for Transportation Studies.

The achievements on the comprehensive pedestrianization campaign in the Makati Commercial Business District was presented by the Ayala Land Incorporated, Makati CBD's developer. It showed that over-all the project has increased walking as a primary option in traveling within the CBD. Data showed that the elevated walkways are used by an average of 200,000 people everyday and 20,000 to 60,000 people everyday use the underpasses, depending on the location. It was interesting to note that the pedestrianization program was implemented primarily to provide alternative to people stuck in the area's heavy traffic and improve the commercial and business image of the area. The Makati City government presented its plans to expand the pedestrianization campaign within the CBD to the rest of Makati. Makati City is developing a comprehensive plan in managing traffic and promoting public transportation in the city. (Say something about the synergy of plans of private and public sector).

The Marikina Bikeways Authority presented its experiences in the usage of the bikeways in Marikina city. To encourage residents to fully utilize the bikeways infrastructure, the city is implementing an extensive bike-to-work and bike-to-school schemes. Aside from schools and the city hall offices, there also are ongoing efforts to link it's the city's bikeways to public transport such as the Santolan LRT station. The World Bank presented its experience in including the Marikina Bikeways project in its Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project and highlighted the importance of a comprehensive plan integrating different modes of transportation.

Senator Pia Cayetano expressed her personal support to the efforts being undertaken by the forum's participants to move the "cycling and walking" agenda forward in Metro Manila. She informed the participants of her involvement in a similar initiative in Clark Development Corporation in Pampanga to promote cycling within its compounds. She spoke about the feasibility of having bike lanes in Metro Manila and highlighted the importance of involving the community and cycling organizations in implementing these plans, and which could help augment the costs needed in its implementation. She also reiterated the health-related importance of cycling to the public.

The Firefly Brigade closed the forum with emphasis on three key elements that should be included in the Metro Padyakan Project: (i) the importance of doing more background studies before full-scale implementation of such metro-wide projects; (ii) an education and training campaign that includes not only the bikers and pedestrians but motorists as well ; and (iii) extensive stakeholder involvement in the project's design and implementation. Venue: Asian Development Bank HQ, Auditorium A, 1:00 - 6:00 pm

Issues

- The provision of bike racks or bike parking in malls in Makati CBD and Metro Manila. Representative of Ayala Land Inc. has committed to look into this issue in the case of Makati CBD. Firefly Brigade will likewise conduct their own mini-surveys to check which commercial establishments and buildings in Metro Manila are biker-friendly.
- The need to market bicycle commuting to the upper and middle class residents of Metro Manila was raised since these are the people who usually have cars congesting Metro Manila roads.
- The importance of including an education campaign in the Metro Padyakan project of the Metro Manila Development Authority.
- The importance of putting up small communities with bikeways such as in schools - UP and Ateneo de Manila bikeways and linking the bikeways to others in the area, in this case Katipunan street. Such a strategy is developing 'island' type of bikeway developments and linking them to each development as project matures.

- The MMDA expressed their willingness to coordinate with and solicit the support of other organizations/ institutions in the project's implementation to ensure that the project will gain the acceptance and support of different stakeholders.
- The Makati City Government Representatives are soliciting the help of development institutions and other funding agencies in developing further the city's comprehensive transportation plan.
- The Firefly Brigade informed the participants that they will be conducting a small-scale survey on the cycling facilities, such as bike racks, in Metro Manila establishments. This information can serve as an important input to the Metro Padyakan Project of MMDA, as the need to have cycling facilities will encourage more people to use the planned bicycle lanes.
- Revising the old Philippine Traffic Law was also proposed in the forum. The current version is outdated and needs to include more provisions for cycling and pedestrianization.
- Providing financial incentives to people who commute by bicycle.
- A Makati Ordinance on impounding bicycles when in sidewalks was raised and the need to review such an ordinance should be pursued.
- The LTRFB representative raised the issue of which government agency would be involved in the monitoring and control of bicycles when the time comes that a substantial number of people are commuting by bikes.
- The Partnership for Clean Air and CAI-Asia will follow-up on the discussions and issues raised in the forum and will help convene similar activities in support of promoting bikeways and pedestrianization in the Philippines.

9. Atienza is wrong on bikes as signs of backwardness

First posted 00:44am (Mla time) Oct 26, 2005
Inquirer News Service

Editor's Note: Published on Page A16 of the October 26, 2005 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer

I WOULD just like to air my comments on Manila Mayor Lito Atienza's opinion that "we would be moving backward" if we encourage the use of bicycles for commuting. According to Atienza, China has banned bicycles in its urban centers. He associates this banning as a sign of progress. It may be true, but that doesn't mean it's the best way to move into prosperity.

China's rapid motorization is one of the reasons we have a global oil crisis. Perhaps, Atienza hasn't visited places like Portland, Oregon in the United States and Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where biking is not only encouraged but has also become the best mode of transportation for their residents. The excellent network of bike lanes has encouraged people there to leave their cars (used for long-distance trips) and just bike to work. As a result, Amsterdam and Portland are two of the most livable cities in the world. Less pollution, less traffic and fewer obese people.

It's also not a coincidence that places like Boulder in Colorado and Davis in California are consistently ranked as among the best places to live in, and they are known as bike cities. And these are nowhere near the definition of "backward."

However, the government and employers should do their part in providing facilities and incentives for bike commuters. Yes, our city is polluted and its air could even be harmful to bikers. But that's because everybody is using cars even for short-distance trips. If we use our bikes more, our air will surely improve. Not just for bikers, but for everybody.

10. **Thousands bike for clean air**

By Luige del Puerto
Inquirer News Service

EVERYTIME Dinna Louise Dayao goes out biking, she knows she exposes herself to polluted air and reckless drivers. But she bikes all the same, she said, to "affirm that cycling is efficient, environmentally sensible and a healthy means of transport."

Together with more than 2,000 bikers, Dinna, a freelance writer, battled the relentless summer heat and toured seven cities in Metro Manila Sunday to spread the gospel of biking.

They called the event, the "Tour of the Fireflies," a tribute to the light-carrying creatures that are disappearing fast in urban centers. "Fireflies are very sensitive insects, and very beautiful too. They are, however, dying in Metro Manila because of pollution," Dinna told the Inquirer.

"Like them, we are dying too, albeit slowly, because of pollution. We bike to show everyone that we want clean air, now" she said.

Metro Manila has more than two million motor vehicles, which produce 75 percent of the air pollution in the capital. Next to New Delhi, Shanghai and Mexico City, Metro Manila is one of the most polluted cities in the world.

Many of those who joined the tour were first-timers. Among them was Jasper Manlapaz, a footballer. Jasper rides his bike to work.

"When you choose to bike, you help the environment by not producing toxic fumes. In the process you also exercise your heart, ensuring a healthy life," he said.

Another first-timer was Ayran Arellano, a 5-year-old boy. His father Ridan brought him along with his elder brother Ayrl. Dressed like a firefly, Ayran has yet to understand the politics of biking, but he loves to bike, says his dad. "I want my children to grow up in a pollution-free city with biking lanes," Ridan said.

The veteran cyclist Roberto Abellar Sarreal, a pollster, missed the tour this year due to an inguinal hernia operation. At 74, he has been the oldest racer in the tour.

Riding in a support vehicle, Sarreal said biking has kept him healthy. He calls on senior citizens to do the same. "Next year, I'll be on," he said.

Catrina Rasha Ricardo won this year's best firefly costume competition. For her prize, she will fly to Bangkok, courtesy of Lufthansa Airlines, in an all-expense paid three-day trip.

Started in 1999, the Tour of the Fireflies has been urging people to ride bikes, instead of cars. Firefly Brigade, the tour organizer, said the government would do well to promote biking as an alternative transportation system.

The key to this, the group said, is an efficient local bicycle traffic lane, like the 66-kilometer bikeway network constructed in Marikina through a World Bank grant.

The brigade is now working on transforming the University of the Philippines in Diliman into a calmer and safer "bike" campus. The campus oval has been rendered "car-free" on Sundays so people can walk and ride bikes without fear of getting bumped or sideswiped by a car.

Indeed, the benefits of biking are endless, contends the group.

Bikes are pollution free. They don't burn anything, except calories. Bikes are cheap. Maintenance is cheap. In fact, more and more workers are buying bikes to save on fare.

Yet the biggest winner in biking is ultimately one's health, everyone agrees. By the time one gets to the office, he or she would have toned his or her muscles, circulated oxygen to his or her body efficiently, and exercised his or her heart.