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Boeing Bluebills build benches for ReCyclery bike school in Port Townsend [***GALLERY***]

By Charlie Bermant
Peninsula Daily News

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ReCyclery co-owner Chauncey Locklear helps Shae Weinblatt Dey repair his bike. Locklear hopes that as kids like Dey grow up they will rely on bikes for their daily transportation. – Photo by Charlie Bermant/Peninsula Daily News



Boeing Bluebills members Larry Elton, left, Ken Winter and Michael Graham, right, display one of the benches they made so Chauncey Locklear, second from right, can teach kids to repair bikes. – Photo by Charlie Bermant/Peninsula Daily News

PORT TOWNSEND — A civic group that usually builds amenities for senior citizens so they can stay in their homes has just completed a more youth-oriented project: constructing four workbenches on which schoolchildren can build and repair bicycles.

The benches, which are housed in a garage near the Grant Street Elementary School, are part of a program sponsored by the ReCyclery in Port Townsend, a community bicycle collective at 612 Polk St. that has the goal of increasing bicycle use to 50 percent of all city residents by 2020.

ReCyclery co-owner Chauncey Locklear called on the Boeing Bluebills for help in constructing the benches, which are considered an essential part of the group's educational program.

Four members of the Bluebills, made up of retired Boeing executives, built the benches from a design developed by Locklear and Bluebill Myron Vogt — who attempted to supervise the effort.

"It was tough doing this because when you get a bunch of guys who used to be managers together on a job, they all want to be the boss," said Larry Elton, who was part of the team.

North Olympic Peninsula and 30 in Jefferson County.

"Most of our efforts are spent building railings or wheelchair ramps so people can stay in their homes," said Michael Graham, another team member. "But we have never turned down anyone who has asked for help."

The four men working on the project — Vogt, Elton, Graham and Ken Winter — spent about 120 hours putting the benches together.

Each workbench has a flat space for putting together bikes and a pegboard for holding the tools along with a lockable space below to store the tools at night.

"It's a good thing for the kids to take the tools out and put them in their place every day and then have to put them back," Locklear said. "They learn to put them in the right place and will know right away if one is missing."

Aside from learning how to use the tools, students also will learn concepts of recycling resources and helping the community, he said.

Fix bikes, donate them

THE RECYCLERY will sponsor an evening of music as a benefit for its bike school from 7 p.m. today until 2 a.m. at the Undertown, 211 Taylor St.

Suggested donations are \$1 to \$20.

The theme is Chicago Night Club, so people are asked to "dress up and look sharp," said Danny Milholland, event coordinator.

Acoustic guitar music by Michael Farr is planned at 7 p.m. Beginning at 10 p.m., disc jockeys will play a variety of music.

Two raffles are planned, one at 10 p.m. and one at midnight.

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The students take donated bikes that are in bad repair, fix them up and then donate them to youngsters who don't have bicycles.

"We get the kids to ride these bikes, but by working on them, they become invested," Locklear said. "Teaching them to use tools and repair bikes empowers them."

Locklear said helping youngsters understand how bicycles work and depending on them for transportation makes them healthier, both physically and mentally.

"Back in the 1950s, a majority of kids would ride their bikes to school and all around the town," Locklear said. "Today in Port Townsend, that number has fallen to 11 percent."

Locklear believes bikes enhance more than health, that they can become part of "a social mover" that involves children in many levels of personal and professional interaction. Once this is accomplished, it's not a great leap to think that, when the children grow up, they will rely on bikes to get to work, Locklear said.

Locklear said Port Townsend is generally supportive of the bicycle culture. The city provides "great bike trails," while motorists are generally courteous, he said.

Bringing bicycling concepts into the classroom can "get kids pumped" about riding their bikes at an early age, Locklear said.

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Reader Comments

Comments:

Posted by Allen Frank on Fri, Apr 29, 2011, 12:21 pm Pacific Time. ([report abuse](#))

MartyV-

It's a huge problem you raise.

You might consider doing a public records request on all tickets issued in the past year to bicycle riders.

Perhaps even past 2 years.

I like the local police officers but I wonder if they have been told not to ticket bicyclists.

When someone gets badly injured or killed, you will see some action. Doing a Public Records Request now might save someones life MartyV

Posted by MartyV on Fri, Apr 29, 2011, 10:00 am Pacific Time. ([report abuse](#))

I'd like to see a mandatory training to teach all bike riders the rules of the road. This past week I have had two riders whiz through the STOP signs on San Juan right in front of me.

Posted by Allen Frank on Fri, Apr 29, 2011, 8:20 am Pacific Time. ([report abuse](#))

It's a looong bike ride to Silverdale/Poulsbo/Sequim/PA for this young lad to peddle to shop. And even a longer bike ride to go to find a decent job.

I have a bike.

I love riding my bike. I rode to school in the 50's, 60's & 70's.

But the reality is we have a systemic recession that is much worse than the political pundits are willing to admit. Mr Locklear's dream, while noble, is likely impractical.

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