

STRAINED BREW | SANTIAGO BY BIKER | DIY STRIPPING

# BIKEMONKEY

## travels IN THE familiar

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SPRING 2010 | ISSUE NO. 9

WELCOME.

# BIKEMONKEY

ISSUE NO. 9  
> spring 2010

C'mon in. You're about to dive into a digital issue of Bike Monkey Magazine.

Bike Monkey is a quarterly publication printed in Santa Rosa, California, by several passionate cyclists. We're eager to share our stories about the bigger meaning beneath what it means to ride a bicycle.

Our digital edition is released six months after it is released in print. If you want to catch up, or want to subscribe to our **beautiful** print publication, you can do so by visiting our website:

  
[WWW.BIKEMONKEY.NET](http://WWW.BIKEMONKEY.NET)

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BY NATE SHEARER

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# CONTRIBUTORS



## JEREMY GRENER T

A midwest native, Jeremy lives and works in Petaluma, CA. Most of his days are spent under a styrofoam helmet with spandex-clad haunches, geeking out on craft beer, and spending time with his wife Kate and daughters, sometimes all at once. He also likes jam-band hippy music, but we're working with him on this. Don't worry.



## SCOTT KENEALLY

Scott doesn't mind if people are laughing with him or at him, so long as they're laughing. His humor stories have appeared in *Details*, *Jane*, *Nylon*, *mcsweeneys.net*, and in the anthology *Rejected: Tales of the Failed, Dumped and Cancelled*. For a living, Scott writes music video and commercial treatments, and is at least partly responsible for Paris Hilton's infamous burger campaign.



## JANEEN MCRAE

Janeen is an Australian writer trying to avoid writing her novel. Her latest procrastination technique is riding her bike across the USA, but of late, she's also tried a career in advertising and journalism in Brooklyn, NYC. Once she's on the road, one can follow her transcontinental escapades at [nodirectionknown.com](http://nodirectionknown.com). Those more interested in how her bike feels about it should try [yesiamprecious.com](http://yesiamprecious.com).

## PAMELA PALMA

Riding at age seven and shooting pictures shortly afterwards, Pamela, her bike, and her camera travel far and wide, most recently to beautiful Chile. On the streets of Santiago, she shared the challenges of the crazy roads with other "ciclistas" whom she lovingly captured for us. A Bay Area favorite, Pamela counts Sheila Moon, My Alibi, and B. Spoke Tailor amongst her client list.



## NATE SHEARER

After spending much of his life focused in some way or form on the bicycle, Nate spent several years living in NYC and working as a hairdresser in the wild world of fashion before packing his truck and heading west to spend one more year traveling and riding his bike. He returned to DC two years ago and is back to splitting wigs for a living.



## STEVIL KINEVIL

As a boy in the Colorado wilds, Stevil had big city dreams. Born with a wrench in one hand and a paint brush in the other, he chased those dreams until they nearly destroyed him. Now he exists amidst abused custom bikes and half-done paintings, waiting for his soul to be saved, or a sugar mama to take him to a tropical paradise. Whichever comes first.





## flippin' fun

I DON'T LIKE RUNNING. IN FACT, IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT I HATE RUNNING. IT'S A DREADFUL EXPERIENCE FROM HERE to there, wherever here or there may be. Not shockingly, I look miserable when running. I start each run grimacing like a grade schooler sent to the principal's office. And after a few miles, I fully look like I'm dying. In fact, that's what my friend Rhi said after driving past me: "You looked like you might not make it." So you can imagine how thrilled I was when my fiancée suggested that we train together for a half-marathon.

Crickets.

"Come on," she purred, "it will be good for us."

What she really meant to say was *you*. It will be good for *you*. Amber recently became a certified personal trainer and when she does those lunges with the little red dumbbells and her fancy abs, she looks like a fitness model. I don't ever look like that. The lines in my stomach do not highlight abdominal muscles as much as they underscore doughy rolls. Whereas she could be peeled off the pages of *Health & Fitness*, I look like I'm scraped off the cover of *Soft & Sedentary*. With this—and all the imminent wedding photos—in mind, I take Amber up on her fitness challenge.

To clarify, I'm not averse to all forms of aerobic exercise. I don't mind, for example, pedaling my bike up steep hills because I know that I can bomb back down at breakneck speed. Well, that's not entirely true. I always mind the climb. But I liken it to waiting in a long, serpentine line for Space Mountain. Nobody wants to do it, but at least there's something to look forward to. Running, on the other hand, just sucks from points A to B. It's like waiting in that line that wraps around, back and forth and back again, only to find that there's no roller coaster at the front of it. And so, in preparing for our half-marathon, I've decided to forgo all common sense and run as little as

i find myself calculating what a broken collarbone or fractured fibula might cost—before safely, humbly rolling over the jumps.

possible. My plan is to whip myself into *mountain biking* shape, and hope that it somehow translates into me not collapsing or puking in a porta-potty during the race.

First, I need to rescue my bike from somewhere in my storage locker, as I haven't seen it since the Bush White House. Sadly, what was once an obsession has become just something I fondly reminisce. Like drum circles. Or that time I wanted to live on a commune and write a book called *The Inspired Dimension*. This hiatus is likely due to the fact I've never been a year-round rider. I've always sat out the wet winter season and assumed that each spring, I'd start the cycle all over again. But as the years ticked by and male pattern inertia set in, I found it nearly impossible to summon the will for that first spring season climb. Until now. Anything but running, I tell myself. After a major tune-up, and with a noble goal in mind, I'm back on the saddle at nearby Annadel State Park.

The initial climb is even harder than expected, a relentless hour that leaves my legs and lungs screaming like lobsters in a stockpot. But upon catching my breath at the summit, I'm all shits and giggles at the sight of the subsequent singletrack. And as I drop into it—rushing over rock gardens and whipping through redwoods—I'm instantly transmogrified from the Garfield-like lump of my early thirties, into the adrenaline junkie of yesteryear. Well, almost, anyways. I'm decidedly less aggressive than I remember.

Back in the day, a few of my buddies considered me to be, and I quote, "a must-see mountain biker." But before you snigger at my conceit, you should know that my legendary stature had nothing to do with technical savvy or prodigious talent. Rather, it stemmed from my epic and unsightly wrecks. I've always possessed an unnerving ability to cartwheel over my handlebars, twisting and flipping through

the air like a Russian gymnast, but without any of the grace or foresight. When I'd finally land and skid to a stop—with my bike, body, and the contents of my CamelBak scattered about—I looked like a yard sale.

*Moleskine journal?* Cell phone? Right this way, sir.

*A patch of skin?* Up on those rocks.  
*Pint of blood?* Cup your hands, please.

Because of my tendency to be the blooper reel, my buddies often urged me to take the lead on the way down. “You go first,” they'd say, not wanting to miss the action. So entertaining were my crashes that once a friend who was riding ahead of me pulled off to the side of one sketchy stretch of trail and hid, waiting until, you guessed it, I catapulted off my bike, right where he predicted. I heard him cackling even before I tumbled into the blackberry bush. This friend, Ryan, once said that I rode “as if asking for an airlift.” And though I suspected he intended this as a warning, you'd think he'd just passed me the Purple Heart.

It's not that I had a death wish or any particular desire to breathe with the aid of a ventilator. But I lived for that skin-crawling, hair-raising rush of uncertainty familiar to the young, the reckless, and any number of dead celebrities. It felt very “rock” at the time. How quickly things change.

In the week before the half-marathon, I feel fairly confident that I've clawed up enough hills and run enough miles to at least *cross* the finish line. But what began as a way for me to avoid the boredom and brutality of jogging, has turned into something more—a jarring revelation that I'm just not the same guy I used to be. By this point, I should feel more comfortable on the saddle. I should be *charging* downhill. But instead I've become skittish, a hypothesis that's confirmed at Soquel

Demonstration Forest near Santa Cruz.

Packed with so many jumps, drops, dips, logs, seesaws, planks, and banked corners, the trails here are a mountain biker's wet dream. But for me, *this me*, it's a nightmare. Not surprisingly, there's a helipad in the middle of the forest. Riding down the *holy-shit-that's-steep* singletrack, I find myself working the brake levers like stress balls, squeezing my handlebars for dear life. I don't want to flip or twist or cartwheel over anything. And as I close in on one perfectly placed jump after the next, I no longer wonder how much air I can get. Instead, I find myself calculating what a broken collarbone or fractured fibula might cost—before safely, humbly rolling over the jumps. *Is it because I'm older?* Perhaps. Now that I'm engaged, I do find myself with more to live for than when I last rode.

I don't have health insurance. Thanks to a variety of factors, namely *the outrageous cost of health insurance*, this writer can no longer afford this luxury. And without any coverage, I certainly can't afford pins and plates in my arm, let alone an airlift. I like to think that this fact informs and mitigates my every move on the bike. That if I had health insurance, I'd be as ballsy as I was before. It's better than thinking I've lost my edge. But I know in my heart this isn't so.

As Amber and I prepare to raise a family in the not-too-distant future, thoughts of my own vincibility have crept into my inner dialogue. I'm not that same must-see rider. There's no need to pull over and watch. I'm no longer young and reckless. I'm what Rush Limbaugh might call a W.I.M.P.: a woman-influenced man person. Still, even if mountain biking is not like it used to be—even if it's no longer Space Mountain—I wait in that line knowing it's a ride. **B**

Call your favorite bar, ask them to make you a cocktail, then see if they'll deliver it to your house for half price.

Then ask them to do it regularly and repeatedly over a calendar year.

Didn't think so.

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