

**DISCOUNTS for SFBMA Members are available at the following places. Patronize these friendly establishments! And look for Cognition at these hot spots! The following bike shops give 10% discount on parts to SFBMA members:**



Spahr photo: Kyle Shepard

- **Big Swingin' Cycles** 1122 Taraval, SF, 415-661-2462 (also 10% discount on labor)
- **Road Rage Bike Rental and Repair**, 1063 Folsom, SF, 415-255-1351 (also 15% discount on labor)
- **Freewheel Bike Shop** 1920 Hayes St., SF, 415-752-9195 and 980 Valencia, SF, 415-643-9213
- **Pedal Revolution** 3075 21st St., 415-641-1264
- **Cycle Sports** 3241 Grand, Oakland, 510-444-7900 (also 10% discount on labor)
- **Missing Link** 1988 Shattuck, 510-843-7471, 1963 Shattuck, Berkeley 510-843-4763

Other Established friendly(s)

- **Cassidy's Bar**, 1145 Folsom, SF, 415-241-9990— \$2 beer specials M-F, 6-8 pm for working messengers 21 & over
- **The Sports Basement**, 1301 6th St., SF, 415-437-1415
- **XS Bar**, 622 Polk St. \$1.50 Pabst for messengers
- **Downtown Dawgs @ The Wall**, 1/2 price hot dogs, & 75 cent drinks and cookies and brownies \$1.
- **Hotel Utah Saloon**, 500 4th St., SF, 415-546-6300 Happy Hour Specials and SFBMA band friendly

SFBMA LONG SLEEVE & SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS AND HOODIES.... BLACK ON RED AND RED ON BLACK. A REALLY GREAT LOOK FOR SPRING.

COGNITION GIVES A BIG HUG TO NELLIE NELSON, KYLE SHEPARD, SARAH KUNG AND JOE CORIO FOR BEING SUCH NICE HELPERS! MANY THANKS FOR YEAR'S DUES (OR DUES SENT FROM VERY FAR AWAY): RAK!! TINA KOCHAN!! BERNIE!! HEY! DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR DUES! DUES ARE PAYABLE TO YOUR OFFICERS. RECEIVE A FREE PATCH WHEN YOU PAY HALF-YEAR (\$25) AND A FREE T-SHIRT WHEN YOU PAY A FULL-YEAR (\$50)

**COGNITION** is the newsletter of the San Francisco Bike Messenger Association, an organization dedicated to the improvement of work conditions for SF's Messenger industry.

**S F B M A**  
**255 9th St.**  
**San Francisco, CA 94103**  
**415-626-1912**

Our Offices are located at 255 Ninth Street.  
 Our home page is at: [www.sfbma.org](http://www.sfbma.org)  
 and e-mail is: [sfbmacognition@hotmail.com](mailto:sfbmacognition@hotmail.com)

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR JULY

- WED 7/9** ANNUAL ICE CREAM DAY, MAKE YOUR OWN ICE CREAM AND COMPARE IT TO OTHERS 12:00 P.M. - 2:00 PM LAWRENCE HALL OF SCIENCE CENTENNIAL DR. NEAR GRIZZLY PEAK BLVD. BERKELEY.
- WED 7/9** VZ 26MIX MISSION & 26TH STS CYCLING SOCIAL 6PM 10PM OPENING BAND POETICS \$5 COVER
- THURS 7/10 SAT 7/12** SFBMAGENERAL MEETING. 255 NINTH. 7PM KOOLIECAT DAY ON THE WEEDS FESTIVAL - 12 NOON FAIRFIELD AND KOOLIECAT RIFF RAFF ROCK CLUB - 9 PM 126 W. SECOND ST, CHICO
- SAT 7/12 SAT 7/19** V @ RED'S JAVAHOUSE PIER 30 12 NOON-6PM Z SECRETSHOW SATURDAY JULY 19TH, AFTERNOON SEND VIKTER A SHORT E-MAIL TO VIKTERV@SOCIOLOGIST.COM
- SAT 7/26 THURSDAY 7/31** GOOFBALLADSR KOOLIECAT, THE TEMPEST - 9 PM 431 NATOMA, WIDDERSHINS, SUNFLOWERS, REELIN, AND SPECIAL PRESENTATION FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO BICYCLE BALLET, AT THE RED VIC, UPPER HAIGHT, 7:15 AND 9:15.

ONGOING EVENTS  
**SFBMA GENERAL MEETINGS ARE THE 2ND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH.**  
**SFBB VOLUNTEER NIGHT:** EVERY TUESDAY ENDING WITH 3. CALL 415.864.2588 FMI  
**SFBC VOLUNTEER NIGHT:** EVERY WEDNESDAY, 5-9 PM, IN THE SFBC OFFICES 1095 MARKET ST, SUITE 208 (@ 7TH) CALFEE@SFBKE.ORG.  
**CRITICAL MASS 5:30PM, EVERY LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH. JUSTIN HERMAN PLAZA BERKELEY/EASTBAY CRITICAL MASS 5:30 PM, THE SECOND FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH. GATHER AT THE DOWNTOWN BERKELEY BART. DEPART AT 6 PM.**



### Courier Disaster Response Team Report

BY SERENITY ENRIQUEZ

For those SF messengers that made it to the Annual West Side Invite hosted by the Portland United Messenger Association (PUMA), you probably noticed a few Courier Disaster Technicians (CDTs) lurking in the background waiting for blood to spill. Fortunately, not a lot made it to the ground.

It was a very educational process, taking a CDRT crew up to Portland to run first aid. We will be pulling our shit together again for the CMWC 2003 in September. If you want to join us in assuring the health and safety of our fellow bumies, call Serenity at 415-64-1818 or email [sf\\_cdt@yahoo.com](mailto:sf_cdt@yahoo.com).

During the Axis of Evil Bike Polo, there were enough bumps and bruises to go around as unabashed messengers, drunk from the debauchery and PBR battled to the end with their mallets and mad skill. Nobody wanted to admit they were in pain, so our crew mostly just watched those crazy messengers gimp around. We made sure everyone was alright, but tried not to interfere with anybody's machismo.

Kudos to PUMA for hosting a great West Side Invite and much gratitude for our hosts who graciously allowed us to crash on their couches and floors! The CDRT crew had a great time in Portland and so did I, as I spent the next two weeks hanging out there just riding my bike....

Thanks to the volunteers that made it happen; including the ever-amazing Kay and Monique! CDRT is also very grateful to Becca's brother, George in Iowa who sent CDRT a very nice array of first aid supplies! Aloha!

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It's odd to miss someone you didn't really know. We did say "hey" or "how's it going?" when we crossed. But I can't imagine how hard it is for those who knew him. I have a snapshot of Nestor in my mind. He's on the shuttle talking to someone about motorcycle parts. His eyes flash and the words fly: he's inspired, alive. The colors are still sharp now, but he's gone. The picture makes me stop.

Standstill. Freezing emotion, swallowing thought, choking motion. I only want to roll up and hug my knees. I hope these pictures help us on, loosen arms from knees, unclench our individual grief. That was important: our ride to Mission Rock. It felt better to put my arms around someone else.

Missing Nestor this way makes me think we were closer than I first thought. That I'm closer to many of those who miss him so much. Is it just that we are messengers? It makes me believe our community is truly close. For Nestor, for everyone—Sarah Kung



# Nestor's Memorial Ride



photo: Sarah Kung



photo: Sarah Kung



photo: Sarah Kung

# Ride and Remember

# COGNITION

**President:** Sarah Kung  
**Executive Director:** Howard Williams  
**Secretary:** David Monaghan  
**Treasurer:** Carey Dall  
**Editor:** Sammy Shiraco  
**Copy Editor:** C. Nellie Nelson  
**Layout:** Donny Don Don  
**Masthead Logo:** Louie Seastres

## ESTABLISHED 1990

The San Francisco Bike Messenger Association was first started as a humorous, yet-in-er-face, answer to the AMCS; if the owners could have a club, so could we.

## WHO WE ARE

We are you, if you are a current or former employee of the SF messenger industry. This includes walker, bicycle, moped, motorcycle, and driver messengers, as well as order-takers and dispatchers.

## WHAT WE WANT

We want what is well overdue: appropriate compensation for our efforts. This includes a livable wage, health insurance, sick pay, vacation pay, pension plan, equipment compensation, etc. You know, normal workers' rights.

## HOW WE WILL GET IT

We will get it by becoming one unified force, and standing up to the entire industry with our demands. In the past, we have proven that we can stick together to help each other out by holding countless benefits, hosting the best Cycle Messenger World Championships of all time, coming together to pay tribute to fallen comrades, holding toy drives for needy kids, the annual Russian River Ride and even things as simple as creating our own underground social scene each and every day of the week. Now that we have a working agreement with the most powerful union in the Bay Area, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, we have the experienced backing to stand up in our industry and achieve our goals.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Volunteer for the SFBMA. You can leave a recording that 415-626-1912. Dues are \$5 each month/or \$50 a year and may be paid to Sarah, Howard, Dave and Carey. Attend as many events as you can without becoming obnoxious as starlings.

# Nestor's Memorial Ride



photo: Sarah Kung



photo: Sarah Kung



photo: Sarah Kung



photo: Sarah Kung

# What's Cookin'?

## SUPER SQUASH SOUP

ANY SQUASH WILL DO.  
SERVES 5 CUPS

### WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 SQUASH, CUT IN 1-2" CHUNKS
- 2 MEDIUM YELLOW ONIONS
- 4 CLOVES GARLIC
- 3/4 TEASPOON SALT
- 3 TABLESPOONS BUTTER
- 4 CUPS BOILING WATER
- 1/2 CUP CREAM OF MILK
- 1/2 CUP OF BEER

### WHAT TO DO

SAUTEE ONIONS, GARLIC, SALT, AND BUTTER UNTIL CARAMELIZED. ADD SQUASH CHUNKS AND WATER. SIMMER 40 MINUTES OR UNTIL SQUASH IS SOFT. BLEND, RUN THROUGH SIEVE OR WHISK UNTIL SMOOTH, ADD MORE WATER IF TOO THICK. READY TO EAT OR CHILL FOR ZESTY SUMMER DRINK (SPRIG OF PARSLEY AND BASIL CAN BE ADDED FOR A KICK!).

## HOMES' BREAD

### WHAT YOU NEED

- 3 1/2 CUPS FLOUR \*
- 1 2/3 CUP WATER, COLD
- 1 TEASPOON SALT
- 1 TABLESPOON YEAST, DRY
- 1 TABLESPOON HONEY
- 1/2 CUP OF BEER (WHATEVER FLAVOR)

### WHAT TO DO

HEAT 3 1/2 CUPS OF FLOUR FOR 8° MINUTES IN THE OVEN @ 200 DEGREES. MEANWHILE, MIX WATER, SALT, DRY YEAST AND HONEY IN A BOWL. THEN GET THAT HOT FLOUR AND STIR IT IN THE WATER MIX WITH A FAST HAND. IT SHOULD BE STICKY AND GOOEY. IF NOT GOOEY ENOUGH, ADD MORE WATER. STIR IT AROUND AS LONG AS YOU WANT. ADD THE BEER. MIX TIL MIXED.

THEN, COVER IT, PUT IT IN A COOL PLACE, GO AWAY AND IGNORE IT. GO TO WORK, TAKE A WALK, GO TO SLEEP, WHATEVER. IF YOU HAPPEN TO PASS IT DURING THE DAY, POUND IT AROUND A LITTLE WITH A WET SPOON. IF YOU ARE GOING TO IGNORE IT FOR MORE THAN 8 HOURS, PUT IT IN THE REFRIGERATOR. IF YOU ARE IN A HURRY, IGNORE THE IGNORING PART AND PROCEED TO THE NEXT STEP. PREHEAT OVEN TO 350 DEGREES. POUND YOUR STICKY DOUGH AROUND WITH A WET SPOON TO POP ALL THE BUBBLES, THEN DROP IT INTO A WELL OILED BREAD PAN. LET THE DOUGH RISE IN A WARM SPOT FOR 10 MINUTES. IF IT WAS KEPT IN THE REFRIGERATOR, LET IT SIT A LITTLE LONGER. PUT THE BREAD IN THE OVEN AND BAKE FOR 50 MINUTES.

## Messenger Dictionary!

**BOBBLE.** /Bob-əl/ Noun. 1. A small round ball of soft material used as decoration commonly seen on baskets and such. **BOBBLY** Adjective. That bobbly outfit won't be comfortable to ride in..

**JACK HOLE** /Jak 'hōl/ Noun: 1. A contemptuous term used in traffic or wherever it is necessitated. Origin: Streets of SF. Asshole, jackass combined. 2. A Bunny Rabbit's Home.

**UBIQ-UI-TOUS** /yü-'bi-kwët-tëts/ Adjective 1. existing or being everywhere at the same time: constantly encountered: widespread. The ubiquitous Howard is delightfully friendly.

Inspired by "The Pedaller's A-Z" on [www.bikereader.com](http://www.bikereader.com) <<http://www.bikereader.com/>>, used with permission of *Bike Reader's* Scott Munn. Thanks, Scott!



band enthusiasts  
photo: s. s.



photo: Kyle Shepard

## SFBMA BANDS KICK ASS

by Sammy Shiraco

The Lewd, Straggler, E-ZeeTiger and the Grasshoppers played for the SFBMA at a benefit on Saturday, June 28th at the El Rio. The donations collected in memory of Nestor went to the Bones' fund for injured messengers. The crowd seemed very happy to be there. The weather was excellent and the bands were great.

My favorites were Straggler and E-ZeeTiger. E-ZeeTiger, Anthony Petrovic's one man band is a thrill to listen to as well as watch.

Arms and legs, singer/songwriter, drums, guitar, mixology and more all pumping out of one guy. It sounded garagey, swampy, punk and not at all like Gianni. I was sorry when he ended, lucky for all of us the guy likes to play out. He also has a recent release (yes, it's called "Hey Kids I'm a one Man Band" put out by 360° stereo abuse recordings) and rumors about say that another is on its way. Straggler made me feel like I wanted to slam dance. Unfortunately, due to

gimp factors I did not. But it still was great to tap away on my little bar stool and listen. I heard them say that they were from Oakland, SF and Alameda. Lucky to have commuting musicians who even have a kicking sound check. I am not sure if they have an album out yet, but if they did, I would definitely want it.

I hope that there will be more fun shows like this in the future.



photo: s. shiraco



SFBMA celebrants  
photo: s.s



E-ZeeTiger photo: s. shiraco



Steve photo: Kyle Shepard



President Kung  
photo: s. s.



Nellie  
photo: s.s

## Presenting Dr. Crank, the Advice Messenger!

**Q: Dr Crank, what should be done about a bike messenger who continues to ride in a dangerous and careless manner even after being asked by his fellow messengers to stop doing so?**

**A:** Those of us who've done the job for a while know that riding like a fool brings about bad results. Doing things that could cause others to be injured is wrong and unprofessional and only leads to disrespect of all couriers in the city.

There are many maneuvers that a bike courier may make during a day of work that may look dangerous to a non messenger or bike rider that really are not and can be pulled off safely without endangering anyone, but blindly entering

intersections and bombing the wrong way down one way streets at high speed does not fall into this category and is just stupid and careless and selfish.

If there is a messenger out there ignoring the advise of his other fellow messengers to stop riding like a fool, then said individual should be fired. Or maybe someone should put a u-lock around this person's bike until he or she gets the point that riding like an idiot hurts us all.

Now get hot rookie,  
Dr Crank

Have a question for Dr. Crank, our all-knowing advice messenger? Send it along to *Cognition*.



Straggler  
photo: s. s.



Art in progress  
photo: s. s.

## FACT OR FICTION? COOL look not so cool

A recent study released by the *American Orthopaedic Scientific and Review* warns of the danger of bicycle riding with a bike lock in the back pocket. According to the Board, "We have seen many tragic injuries that could have been avoided." Additional back, hip and other serious traumas occurred as a result of the accident victims carrying a lock in the back pocket. Crushed bones and herniated disks were at the top of the list. Studies indicated injuries exasperated by the forceful blow of the lock. The panel concludes with a strong recommendation to "not wear bike locks and keep them out of pockets."

## The Guinness Book of World Records TRIVIA!

### LONGEST BICYCLE

The longest bicycle ever built without a third stabilizing wheel is 25.88 m (84 ft 11 in) long, built by Super Tandem Club Ceparana of Italy. Forty club members cycled a distance of 112.2 m (368 ft) at Ceparana

### FASTEST BICYCLE SPEED

The highest speed ever achieved on a bicycle is 268.831 km/h (167.043 mph), by Fred Rompelberg (The Netherlands) at Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah, USA, on October 3, 1995. His record attempt was greatly assisted by the slipstream from his lead vehicle. Fred has been cycling professionally for nearly 30 years and during that time has held 11 world records.

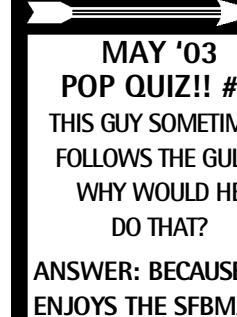
## POP QUIZ!! ANSWERS FROM ISSUE #37



### MAY '03 POP QUIZ!!#1

DOES THIS MAN LOOK FAMILIAR? CAN YOU GUESS WHO'S DAD THIS IS AND WHAT RACE HE WILL CYCLE IN THIS SUMMER?

ANSWER: THIS MAN IS KYLE'S DAD! HE WILL RACE IN THE PARIS BREST PARIS AND MAY VERY WELL WIN.

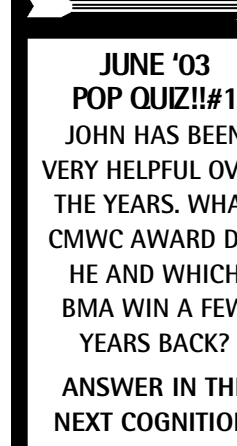


### MAY '03 POP QUIZ!! #2

THIS GUY SOMETIMES FOLLOWS THE GULL? WHY WOULD HE DO THAT?

ANSWER: BECAUSE HE ENJOYS THE SFBMA'S (12 YRS. AND COUNTING) 49 MILE SOCIAL RIDE! THE GULL ICON IS ON THE 49 MILE RIDE SIGNS, WHICH ARE FOUND ALONG THE ROUTE THROUGHOUT SF. IT IS A LOVELY RIDE!

## ! NEW POP QUIZ!!



### JUNE '03 POP QUIZ!!#1

JOHN HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL OVER THE YEARS. WHAT CMWC AWARD DID HE AND WHICH BMA WIN A FEW YEARS BACK?

ANSWER IN THE NEXT COGNITION.



### JUNE '03 POP QUIZ!!#1

WHO'S KID IS THIS? ANSWER IN THE NEXT COGNITION.

## CHP SEEKS TO BLOCK DOORING BILL ACTION NEEDED!

BY KITTEN CALFEE

**B**ikers are needed for a rally and crucial California Senate Transportation Committee hearing on July 1st. AB1408 is potentially historic legislation that could result in substantially improved roadway rights for bicyclists and largely eliminate discriminatory language that has been in the vehicle code for three decades. The bill is sponsored by the California Bicycle Coalition, would have no fiscal impact, and was already approved unanimously by the California State Assembly.

The CHP has declared their opposition to this bill, objecting to provisions declaring that cyclists may legally avoid riding in the deadly "door zone". The CHP's recommendation that cyclists be required to ride directly adjacent to parked cars opens bikers to injuries from being "doored" when careless drivers step out of their cars without checking for bikes. The bill also removes unclear language that often results in law enforcement officials issuing false citations based on misunderstandings of current code.

SF cyclists are needed to attend the 7/1 hearing at 1:30pm, where this bill's fate will be decided. The CBC is coordinating carpools and train buddies for this event, to ensure the trip to Sacramento is as quick as possible. To attend this crucial hearing, please contact CBC Campaign Coordinator Sarah Syed at (510) 704-1803 or at [ssyed@lmi.net](mailto:ssyed@lmi.net). Sarah can also send you a copy of the bill text upon request. A special call-in day on AB1408 will be held Monday, June 30th.



Silver photo: Kyle Shepard

## BEAIE M W N Z I C

THE QUEENY EP, BY THE VIKTER VZ XPERIENCE  
BY BARTON SEAGRAVE



**T**his recent ep release from the Vikter VZ Xperience lyrically examines the many stages of love. The band less vocals is that and damn sincere. I like the guitars alot. It makes me think of bbqs and seashores. "Heartbreak" opens the collection and details the "look at me, please" phase of unrequited love. With out the attention of the other -this infatuation turns into a self-analysis, where Vikter says he will "get to think about it," "question my intention" and talks about his own reinvention.

"Cover me" (with Kisses) is a plaintive tale of sweet longing for the "getting to know each other" phase of a relationship, and the intimacy of time spent together going to the park or anywhere, "as long as you are with me." Here too, we are urged to get to know the lover and asked "what is life without a little time for making up and discovery?" This lover wants to be kept "safe from harm" even if "the whole world falls to pieces, in your arms."

"Schwinn Cruiser" aims to be this collection's hit single and continues the love saga into its "Woe is me, lost the girl of all my dreams" phase. Appropriate to the nostalgia for a lost love, Vikter (singer, lover?) bemoans the loss of his ,64 named Steady Eddy, but we aren't quite sure whether Eddy was a bike or a 38-year-old girlfriend. Anyway, everyone is riding cruisers because "what more would you ever need than a simple Schwinn one-speed?"

"Convenient" (Substitution) is a dark lament of a Vikter tormented by a lover who takes him but will "never really love me" and says this "love is an allusion." He "knows what you say while on your back" and maintains that she wants him "in her own way, but you won't say." This number evokes quite well the haunting and unresolved angst of a love unreturned.

"She Freaks Out" finds Vikter in a domestic love affair challenged by "a really hard day, everything getting in our way." The combo's plodding, oppressive tone on this number reflects the mundane trials of dealing with a relationship when "the walls cave in." Vikter claims that "we talk and we work in it on out," but then comes "we're freaking out, like we all and "here we go again,-somewhere most of us have been."

The remaining two tunes; "Max Beckman" and "The Fifth of the Month" seem to be about an artist who at 33 made a dignified self portrait, thinking "everybody can look at me" and paying rent- "don't know how I'm gonna survive." Other than these recurring themes of worry about self- perception and survival, these tunes, although fully rocking, seem tacked onto to an album about interpersonal love.

## SFBMA Friendly Mary Brown wins Community Hero nomination

**M**ary Brown was elected as one of six Community Heroes honored by the Crissy Field Center this May. She was chosen for her work to improve the urban environment and for inspiring others to follow her example. A life size portrait of each awardee is on exhibit this summer at the CFC.

Brown has worked with Damon and many other SFBMA officers over the years to bridge common interests in the bike community and mass transit at large. She kicked ass to make Valencia Street's bike lane reality and provided results. Currently she leads the SFBC's efforts to update the city's official Bike Plan, bike lanes on Fell Street initiative and lectures at several county fairs. Mary Brown, congratulations!

Cognition



## STOLEN BIKE

**M**Y GIRLFRIEND'S BIKE WAS STOLEN BETWEEN 5 PM & 6 PM AT MARKET AND CASTRO. IT IS A MAROON

AND BEIGE KHS SPEED CRUISER RETRO STYLE WITH BLACK CONTI TIRES IF ANYONE SEES IT, CALL @OFOTO.COM thanks-erik bartels

## An Injury To All... Is A Fucking Ripoff

BY FARCE LE GAL

**I**f you've been wondering why the atmosphere at 1 Post is surlier than usual, look to 1st Legal's upper management for the explanation: they cut pay for all bikes and drivers by \$200 a month (that's for fulltimers -- part timers give up a mere \$130/month).

The explanation is that, "due to financial constraints," they can no longer cover the costs of NICA membership. (NICA is the ripoff organization that helps company owners transition employees to IC's. It has a cheesy replacement of worker's comp, and payroll's done through them. Supposedly, they hold tax workshops -- but they no-showed at the only local one I've heard of. Some IC's use NICA to do their taxes, but I don't trust them with mine.) So, not only are we still illegally classified as independent contractors, we now have to cover 1st Legal's butt for the expense. In the memo informing us of the pay cut, they tell us they "have been supplementing our settlement earnings to help defray our obligation of the cost of the NICA membership" (emphasis mine). Gee, that's so big of them. Like any of us frickin wanted NICA in the first place.

It's true that the NICA fee can be used as a tax deduction. But the raw fact of the matter is that we now are bringing home \$200 less per month than what we agreed to when we accepted our current levels of pay. Are our landlords going to wait 'til tax time for us to pay rent? Can we wait to eat until we've claimed this deduction from the IRS? I don't think so. A pay cut by any other name still bites us in the ass.

And this is no small gain for them. There are 30 or 40 bikers and drivers in the San Francisco office who are affected by this. It adds up to a \$6000 to \$8000 per month raise for the owner (and his lackeys)!! These are people who own their homes, cars, and can already afford stock portfolios. How many of us can own these things while we're doing their work, even before the cuts??? They're taking bread off our tables while we try to cover our SF rent, our costs of raising kids (I can think of at least 5 1st Legal bikers who are parents, and surely many more among the drivers), expensive daily BART fares if you're East Bay, loan and credit card payments -- this is what WE have to contend with. Like ANY of us are in ANY position to even PLAN buying a home. To pass the company's losses

on to us is completely greedy and selfish, unconscionable.

The most obnoxious aspect of this picture is that there is plenty of money in legal messengering. This kind of crap is totally unnecessary. If First Legal stopped its practice of undercutting tag prices, and charged reasonable rates, there would be plenty of revenue coming in to pay everyone fairly. The unofficial industry standard for a non-rush filing out of downtown is \$20 -- 1st Legal charges \$11.25. And court run (route) filings can be \$9, reportedly sometimes even less!!! This obviously directly cuts into workers' pay at the company, but it also undermines other legal courier companies' success. The First Legal business model is so fucked up, greedy, and blatantly illegal, that in the long run, it won't even be self-serving. It's a short sighted, unsustainable way of doing business.

Some people ask if we can just opt out of NICA, and avoid the fees altogether. Unfortunately and ironically, the only alternative is to buy your own worker's comp! Which employees should get free of charge!! Agh, when will they stop the bullshit?! (I have been trying to get a quote for individual worker's comp, but I'm having trouble getting State Fund to respond. If anyone out there knows about this, please let us know.)

First Legal is taking a first swing at us, to the tune of \$200 a month. What if your landlord showed up on your doorstep, raising your rent that much? What if our boss keeps cutting into our pay? The question now is not: what are we gonna do? We are doing something: Getting Screwed. The question is, how long will we continue to take it??

Our regional manager is so scared of even the IDEA of a strike, that his bafflement is on record (in the NLRB decision). His response revealed a mentality that it's our unquestioning obligation to take any tag, at any pay. And to keep silent, never acknowledging the raw deal we're getting.

There are over 20 bikers at 1st Legal. They need everyone of us. There's probably a couple scabs out there, but if we call bullshit, we can depend (as we have in the past) that the messenger community as a whole will rally. If we decide something, and act collectively, we'd have 1st Legal by the balls. When we get our next paycheck, we can all decide that this is bullshit. The only thing then is to act.



Kevin photos: Kyle Shepard

We have nothing to lose but our chains.

(Also, it's illegal to fire people for organizing, so there is, additionally, a long term recourse. The settlement for this kind of firing runs in the tens of thousands of dollars.)

And, I've noticed that our SF office is generally happy with the work we do, and not likely to retaliate. I have reasons for thinking this that I won't print publicly, but maybe conversationally...

I'll leave you with one closing thought: what if you don't work at First Legal, but think this pay cut is crap?? Well, on our memo, it says to call with any questions: Frank Noon, at our LA office, 213-250-1111. I'm sure you can think of several things to ask.



George photo: Kyle Shepard