



Markham residents Jeff Murphy and Jim Emery are set to go on their 12-speed racing bikes — collectively worth an estimated \$6,000. Cycling has made a comeback in a big way in Markham. The pair are decked out in typical cycling gear used for cool spring weather.

Cycling: old sport, new love affair in Markham

By NANCY HOSKIN

You get on your bike and start riding. As you pedal, you feel the immediate exhilaration of freedom. You're beginning an adventure.

Gliding down a winding country road, you breathe the spring air. The wind is in your hair. There is a smoothing silence.

More and more Canadians are discovering that one of the best adventures of their lives is waiting on their own doorstep.

But cycling was never looked upon as a traditional sport in North America until recently.

Now it's widely publicized, and while cycling has always been Europe's number one sport, recreational and expert riders here are only now experiencing the thrills cycling offers.

While area residents enjoy more leisure time, and cycling equipment is further improved and easily available, people of all ages are beginning to participate.

"Cycling is also popular because it isn't as hard on the body as other sports," explained Sean Quartermain, an avid biker. "Running, for example, can be very hard on the knees."

According to Paul Jamison, manager of Unionville's Cycleworks, there are four types of cyclists — recreational, commuter, sports and racer.

• **Recreational Cyclist** This group includes parents, children, young adults and couples. They bike mainly on weekends, pedaling a few miles around residential neighborhoods. Their bikes retail between \$200 and \$300.

• **Commuter Cyclist** There are over 30,000 commuter cyclists in Toronto today, going to and from work daily. Most of these riders have purchased versatile, year-round mountain bikes and can usually beat vehicular traffic.

• **Sports Cyclists** Usually between the ages of 16 and 19, these riders are serious about their sport, training regularly with friends or alone, for exercise and pleasure. The bicycles they ride cost between \$500 and \$700.

• **Racers** Riding on a bicycle retailing over \$1,000, these cyclists are organized and stick to a year-round schedule, competing in races around the country. They are a member of a club and ride year-round, regardless of many weather conditions, because they can't afford not to.

Mountain Bikes

"The majority of bikes sold today are mountain bikes," says

Jeff Murphy, manager of Markham's Cycleworks. "We're presently heading toward the death of the 10-speed. Soon, only the elite cyclists will be riding them."

Mountain bikes, whose styling is similar to bikes ridden in the late 1950s, have become the hottest sellers in bike stores today.

They are durable, more comfortable than 10-speeds, more functional and offer further road stability with wider tires. A rider's hands are on the brakes at all times, making this type of bike safer for novices.

Children's Safety

Mr. Jamison expressed concern over parents cycling with children on the back of bikes. He says riders can easily fall — it's simple for a tire to get caught in a sewer grate.

And bikes are twice as hard to control with the extra weight. Feet and hands can get caught in spokes and a fall from six feet can be quite damaging.

"If parents are going to ride with children on the back of their bikes, they should first purchase a helmet tested and approved by the American National Standards Institute," he said. "Good quality spoke guards are also a must and make sure that the carrier used is securely mounted."

Children's helmets, tested by ANSI, must withstand a weight drop test from six feet, making sure the helmet will prevent a child from receiving a concussion.

While many parents feel that a hockey helmet will do the same job, they are extremely heavy and are usually only tested to withstand a fall from one foot, he said.

"There have been several incidents in Canada where a hockey helmet has been used as headgear for a child," he added. "They fall, and have snapped their necks."

Many cyclists feel that drivers are not educated when it comes to the safety and well-being of the sports enthusiasts: they share the road with.

Though people driving in the city are more aware of reacting to cyclists, many living and driving in residential areas are not aware of a cyclist's rights on the road.

According to the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, a cyclist is entitled to one-half of the lane they are travelling on.

Locally, for example, a cyclist biking on Hwy 7 is entitled to eight feet of the 16-foot roadway.

Jeff Murphy offered a list of rules that should be followed by all cyclists:

• A cyclist should never ride on sidewalks. This is unsafe for both pedestrians and the cyclist, with the worse fall likely being taken by the person on a bike.

• Kids are usually seen weaving in and out while riding their bikes. As parents, make sure they realize that it may be fun to weave in and out, but it is dangerous. Kids should be taught to ride in a straight line.

• Always ride with traffic. It may be safe to walk against traffic, but for a cyclist who is hit, in most cases it will save their life to ride with traffic. He will fall to the side, while a person biking against traffic will be hit straight on and usually end up face-first in a car's windshield.

• Watch for motorists who may open their car doors as you are cycling by.

• Cyclists shouldn't be riding at dusk. The rider tends to blend into the scenery.

• Be alert. Motorists tend to perceive cyclists as stationary objects.

• Helmets are recommended anytime a cyclist is involved with traffic.

The Town of Markham has not designated bicycle paths for riders in this area, though there are plenty of dirt trails for mountain bikes to challenge.

Other cyclists get a substantial work-out on residential roads and with proper care, most skilled riders can be seen on major thoroughfares.

"If mountain bikers take the time to explore, they will discover paths covering many miles, for example, from just below Steeles (Ave.) to the lake," Mr. Quartermain said.

Cycling Club

Markham's Cycleworks formed the town's only cycling club last November. With more than 35 members ranging in age from 12 to 55, the team trains daily in morning and evening.

"Our older members help the novices in learning how to ride properly with skill, which is more important than developing speed, which comes with time," Mr. Murphy said. "We have both men and women in the club and really encourage more females to join. Cycling isn't just a male sport."

Club members participate in four organized rides each weekend, ranging in length from an average hour covering 40 km, to the long 100 km ride which can take up to four hours to complete.

Mr. Murphy says cycling is an aggressive sport — that is growing at a very fast rate — which has caused problems for the Ontario Cycling Association. Currently, it has trouble regulating participants.

"When too many unskilled riders are let loose on the roads, that becomes dangerous," said Mr. Murphy. "Hopefully, more education will take place in school gym programs to alert all types of bikers how to ride correctly."

Though Cycleworks has the only organized training club in Markham, Unionville High School began a program in conjunction with its fitness curriculum last year.

It deals with everything about cycling, covering everything from maintenance to safety.

Woman seized in sex attack

A woman was sexually assaulted last Wednesday on Esna Park Dr. at 5:05 a.m., said police.

The woman was grabbed from behind by one man and assaulted by another, said police.

WHISKERS
FASHIONS OF UNIONVILLE INC.

50% OFF SALE

ALL SUMMER STOCK

BONUS SEE OUR SPECIAL RACKS FROM \$10.00 TO \$50.00

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
477-5358

209A MAIN ST. UNIONVILLE
(corner Carlton Rd.)

CUSTOM TINTING AND SUNROOF SPECIALISTS

TINT MASTER

OF CANADA INC.

"All Tints Guaranteed for 5 years!"

COMPLETE WINDOW TINTS
from \$99.00

COMPLETE AUTO UPHOLSTERY
SEAT COVERS from \$149

SHADOW LOUVRES from \$149

TINT AND SUNROOF SPECIAL from \$249 INSTALLED

AUTO MASKS FROM \$99.00
Protects from bugs & stones

LIQUID GLASS SHINE \$39.95

CUSTOM WINDOW AND BODY GRAPHICS

Denison
Steelcase Rd. W.
Idema
Woodbine
Steeles

MARKHAM
187 Steelcase Rd. West
Unit #15
(416) 479-9004


Business Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sat 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GUARANTEED CANADA'S BEST TINTERS

BUY CANADIAN!
Dealer Inquiries Welcome!

MARKVILLE TOYOTA'S

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



STEVE HORSLEY
Steve had 2 hits and scored twice in a 7-3 Markham Peewee Baseball win over Tottenham.

MARKVILLE TOYOTA
HWY #7 EAST OF McCOWAN
294-8100

The woman was sexually assaulted last Wednesday on Esna Park Dr. at 5:05 a.m., said police.

The woman was grabbed from behind by one man and assaulted by another, said police.