

ARC'S MANDATE

1. LOBBYING AND EDUCATION
on issues of cyclists' rights

2. LEGAL DEFENSE, SUPPORT
AND ADVICE for survivors of car-bike
collisions, and for cyclists unfairly
charged with traffic offenses

3. DIRECT ACTION
AND GRASSROOTS AGITATION
directed at changing our society's
dependence on the automobile

ARC (Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists) is a group which formalizes the principle of cyclists standing up for each other. ARC was formed in August 1996 as a community response to a particularly brutal two weeks which saw two cyclists killed by trucks and another two arrested on a Critical Mass ride. Initially formed to lobby for a coroner's inquest and to help in the arrestees' defense, ARC has since expanded to provide support and legal advice to cyclists involved in accidents, to educate on cyclists' rights, and to hold direct actions aimed at changing society's dependence on the automobile.

If you are a cyclist and you want to get involved, contact ARC.



ARC meetings are open to all cyclists.

ARC is run by volunteers.

ARC is effective.

ARC is tons of fun.

For information and meeting times:

go to
www.respect.to

call voicemail at
(416) 604-5171

or email
arc@respect.to

or use Canada Post

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ARC

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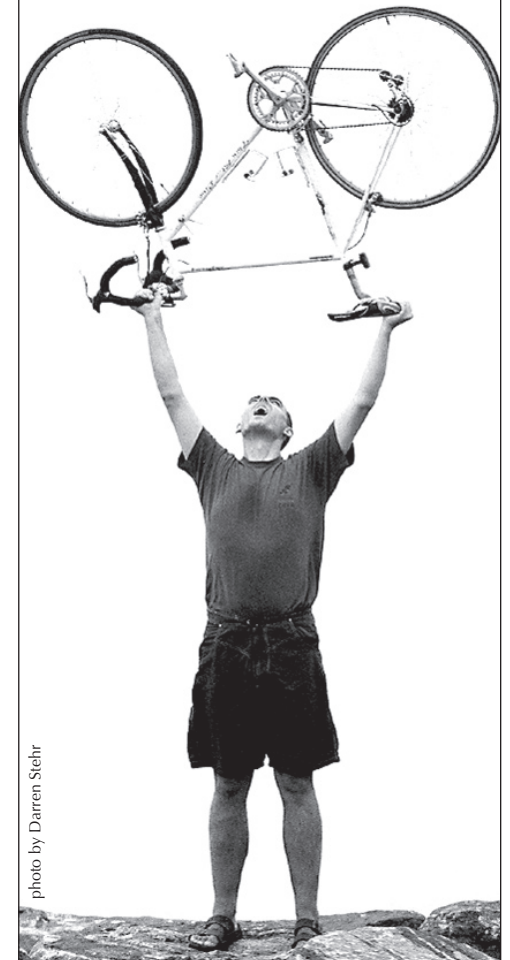


photo by Darren Stehr

ARC's Highlights and Accomplishments

LOBBYING AND EDUCATION

- In the spring of 2000, ARC produced a province-wide cyclists' survey suggesting proposed changes to the Highway Traffic Act. The support for change was overwhelming and ARC is using these survey results to push forward with its goal of a more bicycle-friendly HTA.

- In the fall of 1999, ARC initiated a successful letter-writing campaign, alerting City Council to the devastating loss of bicycle parking following the city-wide removal of parking meter posts which had substituted as bike parking. The City subsequently agreed to an infusion of emergency cash for the bicycle parking budget.

- In the fall of 1998, ARC led the campaign for an emergency bike lane on Spadina following the death of a cyclist there. On Feb 2, 1999, Toronto City Council passed a resolution that city staff implement a designated bicycle lane on Spadina as a pilot project. Cyclists were thrilled until the paint actually appeared on the road, not in the form of a bicycle lane, but a narrow edge line. After ARC's persistent lobbying, Spadina finally made it on the list of streets for bike lanes on the City's Cycling Master Plan released in September, 2000.

* On Sep 8 1998, Regional Coroner Dr. William Lucas released "A Report on Cycling Fatalities in Toronto 1986-1996: Recommendations for Reducing Cycling Injuries and Death." ARC called for this coroner's investigation in 1996, following the deaths of two cyclists on the streets of Toronto in July of that year. ARC was the only independent citizens' group formally involved in the two-year process of research and analysis.

- ARC carries out ongoing Media Campaigns and Political Lobbying/Networking. Due in large part to ARC's efforts, cycling safety has received a high media profile.

LEGAL DEFENSE, SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- In 1996 two cyclists participating in a Critical Mass ride were charged with mischief, failure to stop for police and obstructing police. One of the arresting officers suggested that nobody would stand up for them. A formative function of ARC was to support these cyclists throughout their court trials and appeal process. The last criminal charge was finally dropped on January 27, 1998.

- ARC has raised over \$7,500 toward our Legal Defense Fund. The cyclists we help are overwhelmingly vindicated in court.

- ARC offers periodic free legal workshops. Topics have included: "Lawyers Talk About Cycling", "How to fight traffic tickets and how to be a legal observer", and "Bicycles and the Law".

- ARC disseminates information flyers and bicycle survival kits.

- We provide support for cyclists who need lawyer referrals and related information.

- Over a 3-year period, ARC prepared the groundwork and assembled the legal team for a landmark court case in which a cyclist successfully sued the City of Toronto. In 2001, ARC notified the City of unsafe conditions on several east-west arterial roads downtown. According to the City's own reports, most dooring occur on these streets. The City is aware of the infrastructure improvements they could make to reduce the number of dooring collisions, including bike lanes and wide curb lanes, yet has failed to implement them. In 2002, a cyclist was doored on Queen St. W. and sued the City. On July 5, 2004, the judge ruled that the City of Toronto was negligent for not providing safe conditions for cyclists on Queen St. W.



DIRECT ACTION AND GRASSROOTS AGITATION

- ARC holds on-street memorials for cyclists killed in traffic in and around Toronto.

- Since 2001, ARC organizes regular Cyclist You Are a Hero events, handing out loonies, freezies or fortune cookies to cyclists on the street. It's ARC's way of saying "thanks for riding your bike!"

- In 2000 and 2001, ARC held six Cyclists Strike actions on a particularly dangerous stretch of College St. to raise awareness of the threat imposed on cyclists from suddenly opened car doors, and to demand safe passage.

- Since 1997, ARC has organized several successful Guaranteed Bike Lane Events in which cyclists protect their own bike lanes from cars illegally parking in them. These events highlight the danger imposed on cyclists by this pervasive problem.

- Every year, since 1986, ARC holds annual Parking Meter Parties. In September 2000, ARC and Sierra Club held a block-long Parking Meter Party during World Car Free Day.

- ARC has joined other environmental groups to act out against degraded air quality. In April 1999, cyclists dressed as giant asthma ventilators collected a 10-cent toll from drivers — the same amount as the TTC fare hike. In September 1999, during an air quality advisory, activists dressed as doctors issued prescriptions to motorists to Stop Driving!