

Bikers Seek Change in Metro Rules To Allow Cycles Aboard the Last Car

A group of bicyclists yesterday tried to convince Metro officials to abandon long-standing policy prohibiting bicycles on subway trains.

To prove that it can work, one biker carried a cardboard cut-out of a bicycle onto the subway elevator at the Smithsonian stop and then onto a train.

There was no apparent difficulty. With Washington in the midst of a cycling boom, the Citizens' Coalition of Bikes Metrorail is seeking the use of the rear car on each subway train... and only on weekends.

"It's an idea whose time has come," said David Strom, president of the coalition. "There is no limit on the size of a package a person can carry on the subway, so why prohibit bicycles?"

Cody Pfanstiehl, Metro's public relations director, witnessed the experiment and even offered some friendly tips.

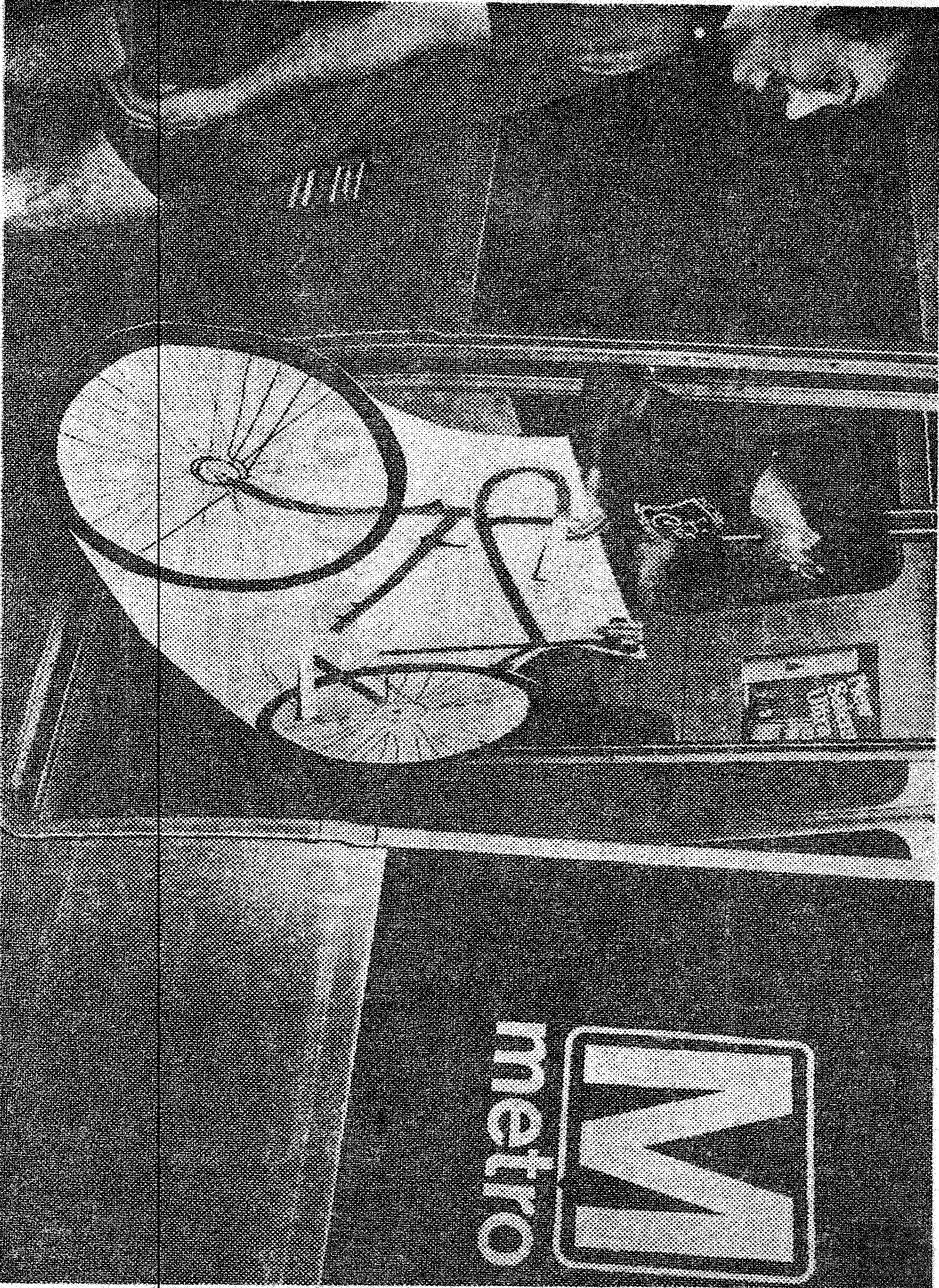
"Now, if I was your PR guy, I'd encourage conversion of the public to let the Metro board know that it's not just a bunch of bicyclists who want this thing," he said. "After all, we have 30,000 riders a day, and what the board is concerned about is the headline that reads: 'Bike Stuck In Deer'."

Strom balked and called this a "care tactic." He cited statistics from a coalition study of 940 Metro trains last showed an average of eight people riding the last car of the Metro.

"You could also get hit by one of those guys pushing a Metro vacuum cleaner," Strom said.

Last year, a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments study estimated that nearly half a million bicycle trips are made by Washingtonians daily. This area, coalition members said, has the largest congregation of bicyclists in the nation.

"We're talking about saving energy



By James A. Parcell—The Washington Post

David Strom uses a cardboard cutout to demonstrate how bicycles can be wheeled aboard Metro subway trains.

and improving the air quality," said Fred VanAntwerp, a U.S. Transportation Department urban planner and coalition member. "This is the going thing. Why is Metro so against that?"

In April, the Metro board rejected a proposal for bikes on Metrorail that called for issuance of permits, train-

ing sessions, clean bikes and access to subways only by elevator.

In San Francisco, a similar program has been in effect for five years, the coalition noted. So far, more than 4,000 bicycle permits have been issued

and only four have been revoked. "What you're up against," Pfanz-

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General News
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The Washington Post

Sunday, September 7, 1980

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stiehl said, "is a conservative element on the Metro board that doesn't want to complicate an already complicated situation. Besides, we have a dozen stations where the elevators bypass the fare collection—but we'll have to deal with that later."

Metro Has a Difficult Time Peddling Bicycle Experiment

Bikes OK on Trains Weekends, Holidays

By Bob Gettlin
Washington Star Staff writer

a safety test and that's important." He noted that BART, San Francisco's subway system, and PATH, which operates between New York and Newark, N.J., have successful bike programs. BART accommodates about 200 cyclists each day, he said.

The first thing to say about a four-hour ride on the back of a subway car on a Saturday afternoon is that a bicycle is not much company.

Of course, it wasn't supposed to be a solitary journey. Metro, which operates the Washington area's 37-mile subway system, began a six-month experiment yesterday by allowing bicycles on its weekend and holiday trains.

There was plenty of room for a bike, a good number of friendly passengers, and tolerant station attendants were on hand. But a cyclist was even more rare than a well-functioning farecard machine.

Metro officials said about 10 bikes were seen in the system yesterday afternoon, but they admitted their survey was very unofficial. One of the bikes was hauled through the Red, Orange, and Blue lines by a reporter who did not encounter another cyclist on a train between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Maybe it was the overcast and humid weather or that some of the station elevators, which must be used to transport a bike could stand some repair. In any case, the program can only get more popular.

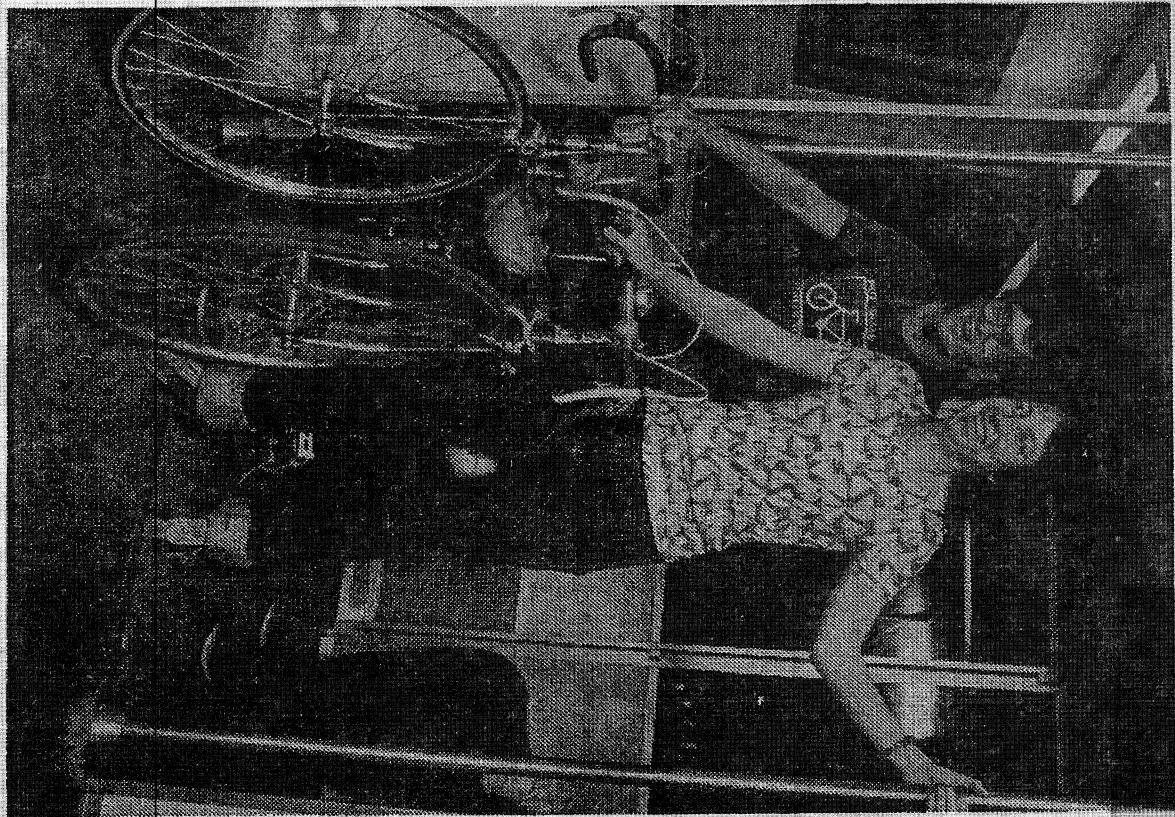
Mark Atkins, head of transportation and special projects for Metro, noted that about 100 bike permits already have been issued.

"I think it's a good thing," Atkins said as he stood at the Metro Center faregates around noon. "The people who have these permits have taken

attendants at several of Metro's 41 stations, though helpful, were less sanguine. "I think it's a ridiculous idea," said Paul Brown, who works at the Silver Spring station. "Eventually somebody is going to get hurt. In an emergency it's OK. But if it's a nice day why not just ride your bike?"

Sydney Rowe, an attendant at Metro Center, said, "If the people follow the rules it will be OK. But this morning I had to tell some people to keep their bikes against the wall and away from the other passengers."

Yesterday, some passengers were inquisitive, asking, for example, how they could get a permit. But most said nothing other than to reassure a cyclist that, no, his bike was not in their way.



The Washington Star/Julia Gaines

David Strom, 27, of D.C. and Nina Rowe, 32, of Arlington found it a bit of a challenge to keep their footing while holding on to their bikes on the first day bicycles were allowed on Metro trains.

Getting a permit is easy, inexpensive, and should take less than 30 minutes. A film on safety and regulations must be viewed at Metro headquarters at 600 Fifth St. NW.

After passing a 17-question exam and paying a \$5 fee, a cyclist will be issued a white and green permit, complete with a color photograph,

See METRO, B-2

METRO

Metro may allow cyclists to 'take the night train'

By Howard Singer
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

Bicycles soon may be allowed on Metro subway cars on weekday evenings after 6:30 as well as on weekends, Metro officials said yesterday.

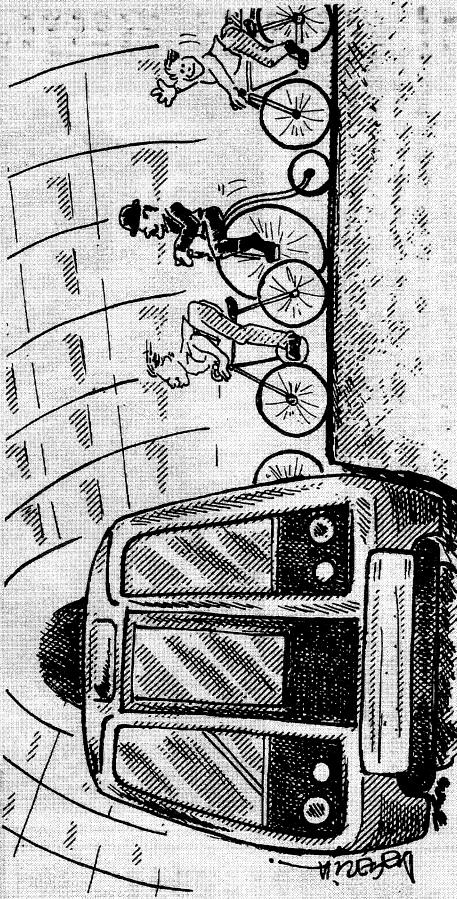
The extended hours, backed by cycling enthusiasts, "stand an excellent chance of getting approved" by the Metro board, said Richard Castaldi, Metro Board chairman.

The board's Safety Committee is now reviewing the plan. Since 1978, bicycles have been allowed on weekends, but only in the rear car of a train.

Castaldi said the policy has caused no problems or accidents.

"In all cases, the current program has resulted in a great deal of publicity and goodwill for Metrorail," said David Strom, leader of a group of cyclists and a research analyst for Congress. "And it puts more money in Metro's ticket revenues."

Permits for bicycles on Metro cost \$10 and are good for two years. Bike lockers at 26 stations are rented for \$25 for three months or for \$70 a year. The crucial issue still to be resolved in the expanded hours is space on the cars after 6:30 p.m. Strom, however, said he didn't believe space would present a problem.



"Besides," he added, "the Best New Idea for 1981 from Washingtonian Magazine's standpoint was allowing cyclists to bring their bikes on the subway."

A survey of the six largest rail-transit systems in the country show that only San Francisco allows bicycles on subway cars.

"We feel it is a danger to other riders," a Chicago Transit Authority spokesman said yesterday. "The possibilities of something happening are simply too great."