

Results—The 5BBC 2004 Membership Survey

Survey Work & Tabulations—Susan Rodetis

***Bicycletter* Summary**—Peter Engel and Susan Rodetis

If you responded to the 5BBC member survey in our Sept/Oct 2004 issue of *Bicycletter* – hats off to you/us. 5BBC leader Susan Rodetis spent a great deal of time designing/tabulating this survey, so we could learn more about *you, how and why* you ride, and how to improve the *club membership experience*. Out of 5BBC's nearly 1,100 members - - 60 returned surveys, for a 5.5% response. That's darn good in market research terms, and pretty good for affinity groups & clubs. Your input is important, and will be listened to. We were particularly heartened by all those who volunteered time and skills; Susan hand-delivered those offers to the Board at the Christmas party. Complete results are too long for *Bicycletter*, and they will be placed in their entirety at www.5BBC.org; we encourage you to review the responses and visual display summaries. And ride-on with us!

Membership Highlights

Out of 60 respondents, 62% are male, 38% female, with the majority ranging in age from 30 to 60. Geographically, as expected, you are Five Borough people – 41% live in Manhattan, 10% in Brooklyn, 25% in Queens, 11% in the Bronx, and the rest in Staten Island, Long Island, New Jersey and Westchester. Survey respondents were also very active in the bicycle and sports club community, particularly when it came to advocacy. Half belong to Transportation Alternatives (TA); over 40% also belong to New York Cycle Club (NYCC). The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), Times Up! and American Youth Hostel (AYH) also have participation from our membership.

5BBC Bicycle Consumers

Survey respondents, of course, spend money on bicycles and bicycling-related items. Over 70% of spend \$\$ at local bicycle shops; some of the most frequently mentioned were Larry & Jeff's; Metro Cycles; Bike Habitat; Toga; North Shore Cyclery; Gotham Bicycles; Sid's; Brands and Champion. At the same time, more than half of our members buy items by mail, phone or e-order (online or catalog), at sporting goods stores, and a few use eBay.

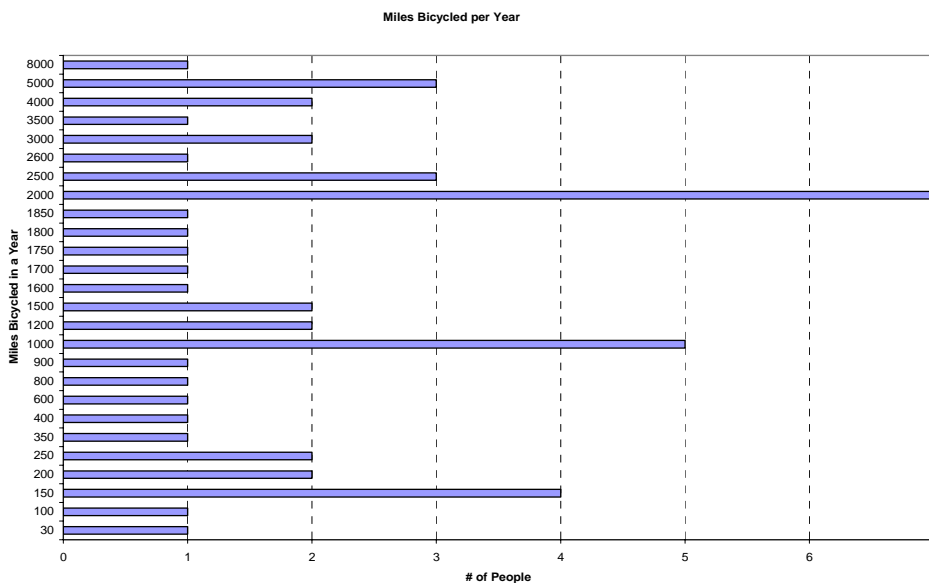
Why We Bike

Write-in responses fell into the following groups:

- 56 fitness/athletics, weight control, conditioning, triathlon-related, longer distances
- 42 fun, joy of riding, adventure, explore/learn, freedom, diversion, challenge, recreation
- 24 social, companionship
- 12 transportation
- 12 touring, new areas, new places/routes
- 11 outdoors, nice scenery
- 9 stress reduction, time for myself, relaxing, least stressful transportation
- 1 family activity

Bicycling Preferences

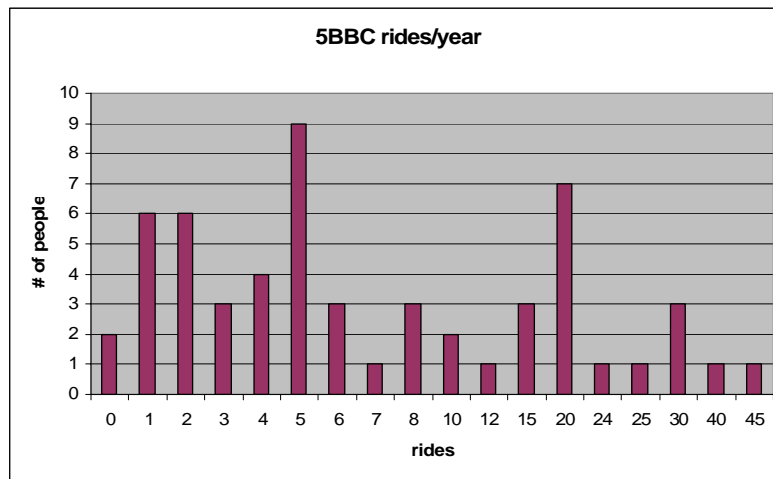
Of 50 responding 5BBC members, in the last 2 full years, 16 cycled between 30 and 1,000 miles annually, 22 did 1,000 - 2,000/year, and 13 achieved 2,000 - 8,000/year (only 1 at that high end!). 58% expect to cycle more in 2004 and 2005, and over 80% prefer a moderate (13-15 mph) pace over Happy Face and Quick Spin rides.



In choice of terrain, equal numbers of respondents first preferred moderate-rolling hills, followed distantly by “flat”, and then by the 11 “can’t get enough” hill-lovers. Favored turf is paved streets and roads, followed by rail trails. Some 20% like off-road paths and trails, and about 5% of respondees would like rides on single-track or technical mountain biking trails.

As for how 5BBC rides can improve – responses ranged from “longer rides” to “more ratings by class-level.” But overall, respondents clearly prefer rides where skill and ability are more evenly matched among riders, there’s less waiting for other riders, and, in some cases, where rides can be finished by 3:00pm or at least by a time range known in advance.

Survey Respondents/# of 5BBC Rides/Year



Why We Bicycle With 5BBC

Over 80% of respondents chose to go on 5BBC rides because they want to tour a particular area. Other prominent reasons included exercise (45), socializing (36), training/fitness goals (23), and skills development (15). We also like an early start – but not too early.

Start Time	Order of Preference				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
eye-opener (7-8:30AM)	18	11	3	-	-
regular (9-10:30AM)	43	7	1	-	-
midday (11AM-1PM)	1	6	7	1	1
Afternoon (1:30–4PM)	-	-	2	8	3
evening (6PM+)	1	2	4	2	6

Montauk Century

At a bit over \$50, survey respondents felt the current Montauk Century fee is priced fairly, and 61% said “No” when asked if they would prefer a lower fee with fewer services. In fact, respondents would like us to diversify. 73% would like 5BBC to produce other special event rides, either in the most basic form or will full-service amenities like Montauk.

Getting To Rides

Survey respondents are adventurous; 77% are quite willing to face bicycling in NYC traffic at the end of an event. In fact, 85% are willing to start/finish a route in an outer borough or outside the city. 42% ranked mass transit as “essential” in getting to/from an event, 43% called it “convenient,” and 15% didn’t consider it important.

5BBC Classes

While respondents were aware of 5BBC classes, only 44% had taken a class in the last 3 years. Mainly, they chose bike repair, followed by the leadership class. Survey respondents want the 5BBC give more classes on health/safety; safety, repair/maintenance, cycling skills, and even how to buy a bike, and possibly SIG classes, because of their ability to build camaraderie between riders and ride leaders.

Communications

Over 60% of survey respondents subscribe to the weekly email news update. In general, members are pleased with the direction/topics we provide in the *Bicycletter* and emails. The #1 thing that respondents would like to see more of is already our core subject – bicycle riding/touring. Additional topics of interest include biking outside New York City, planning independent trips, using public transport for trips, bike safety and etiquette, more member trips and experiences, safe commuting tips, and how to ride hills and long distances.

Some also asked for more information about new products, bike repair and upkeep, and technical aspects of various bicycles. While the 5BBC has been providing more local news recently, there is some interest in things like racing results and advocacy issues (such as Transportation Alternatives’). Finally, respondents would like some information about wellness, health and nutrition.

Survey respondents also appear ready to leave the print edition of *Bicycletter* behind if the 5BBC makes it worth their while. 61% of respondents voted for a lower membership fee (in exchange for saving the club \$\$ by receiving electronic, not print/mail, communications), while 39% preferred the status quo.

Usefulness—5BBC.org

5BBC's updates to its website have been well-received; 87% of respondees said the website has been useful, 93% found it easy to surf, and most (25 respondents) using it for ride listings, followed by general information and updates (16).

Additional Highlights

Skipping rapidly across a lot of areas, responding 5BBC members expressed interest in a wider variety of Day and Weekend Trip destinations; are willing to travel, and to spend to do so, for out-of-area or extended trips. The idea of car pools generated strong response for both Day and Weekend Trips, in lieu of van or bus transport. There was also interest in self-supported trips, plus some desire for more upscale accommodations than the basic hostel level. Increased member communications and interactivity was desired (website bulletin boards, automatic notices on new postings, opt-in e-mail list servers). There is support for more cross-listing of rides with other clubs. Some respondents saw value in limiting automatic and ongoing participation by non-members to Happy Face rides, or to restricting non-members to 1-2 "guest visits" (which supports "like-kind" riders).