

SATX Pedal Power Cycle-In Cinema Blazes New Trails in Alamo City

JORDAN GASS-POORE¹ on 2 August, 2013 at 15:28





Ashley Quinn, [Main Plaza Conservancy](#) programs manager, remembers receiving an email from an unemployed San Antonio resident detailing his appreciation for [SATX Pedal Power](#)'s weekly, free, and family-friendly "Cycle-In Cinema" events.

The man wrote that he had recently lost his job and was excited to bring his young son to the weekly event so they could enjoy bicycle-themed movies from his youth, Quinn said, like "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" and "Quicksilver." The latter screened last night at 9 p.m. in Main Plaza for about 75 people – not including the curious passersby who took a moment to watch and wonder what a young man was doing, riding a stationary bike in the middle of the crowd.



A cyclist powers the SATX Pedal Power projector at dusk in Main Plaza on a recent Thursday night. Photo courtesy SATX Pedal Power / Edward Garcia.

During Cycle-In Cinema, bicycles are locked into a dock that powers a small generator connected to a projector by an extension cord. Volunteers can sign up to power the movie before or during the event.

Every Thursday since mid-July until Aug. 29, the Main Plaza hosts Pedal Power's themed entertainment – like a recent Hawaiian T-shirt contest – at 6 p.m. before the movie gears up at dusk.

Pedal Power Founder Edward Garcia equated the sign-up process to karaoke, adding that the 15-17 volunteers average five-to-eight minutes riding the bicycle – the length of some songs.

The only requirement to volunteer is the ability to reach the bicycle's pedals, said the [Palo Alto College](#) student, who's working toward a degree in dietetics.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their own bicycle, but Garcia brings bikes to borrow as well – including his girlfriend's.

"It's all about social camaraderie and togetherness," Quinn said of the partially bicycle-powered classic movie series, touted as the first of its kind in the state.



"Upcoming Cycle-In Cinema Movies:

- Aug. 8: "E.T."
- Aug. 15: "Now & Then"
- Aug. 22: "Stand By Me"
- Aug. 29: "Karate Kid"

" "



Kids of all ages enjoy an evening in Main Plaza during the new Cycle-In Cinema event. Photo courtesy of SATX Pedal Power/Edward Garcia.



Edward Garcia, founder of SATX Pedal Power, and Ashley Quinn, Main Plaza Conservancy programs manager, teamed up to host Cycle-In Cinema every Thursday night in Main Plaza. Photo courtesy Main Plaza conservancy/Ashley Quinn.

Garcia echoed Quinn's sentiments.

SATX Pedal Power isn't an official for-profit business, nonprofit, or not-for-profit organization, he said, it's just for fun. Community involvement and environmental awareness were some of the reasons why Garcia purchased the equipment that helps fuel the movie's projector six months ago. He said he would like to bring the projector, make-shift generator/dock, and screen to local, underutilized, urban green spaces in the future.

People all over the U.S. and Europe have organized similar pedal-powered events as the trend towards more bike-centric activities spreads.



As the sun sets, locals and visitors watch classic films (typically from the 80s) in Main Plaza for Cycle-In Cinema. Photo courtesy of Cycle-In Cinema / Edward Garcia.

This throwback to drive-in movie theaters made its appearance at Main Plaza last month, but the story of its arrival winds throughout San Antonio.

With a history of work in non-profits and a passion for revitalizing the city's West Side, Garcia initially contacted local bike shops in the area to see if they'd be interested in becoming involved with movie screenings with little luck.

That is, until Garcia's "serendipitous" encounter with Quinn at an event about two months ago. She had also been reaching out to local bike shops for ways to incorporate their equipment into her vision for the future of Main Plaza.

"I thought, 'This is way too good to be true,'" said Quinn, an avid bike rider herself.

Much to his surprise, Quinn soon hired Garcia as a contract vendor.

"I was going to do real small venues," he said. "Then Main Plaza came along. It was like, 'Wow, this is a really huge venue.'"



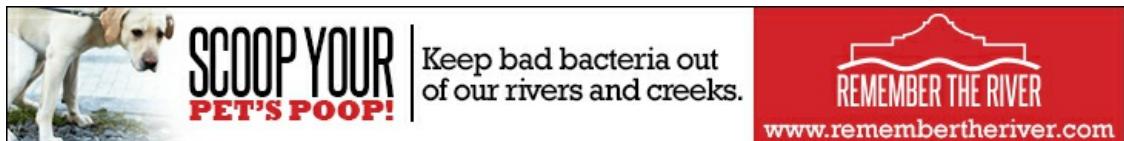
A large crowd gathers for Cycle-In Cinema on a recent Thursday night in Main Plaza. Photo courtesy of Main Plaza Conservancy / Ashley Quinn.

Cycle-In Cinema is not only part of a continued effort by officials to create a more bike-friendly city, but also helps to boost downtown's economic growth, Quinn said, by drawing folks into the plaza for an evening.

She remembered seeing people riding stationary bicycles to generate a movie screen's projector during a festival in San

Francisco, Calif.

"I thought, 'One of these days I'm going to bring an event like this to San Antonio,'" said Quinn, adding that another sponsor of Cycle-In Cinema will be announced next month. Quinn couldn't disclose the name of the donor just yet, but they're hoping that additional support will extend the weekly gathering into September.



Quinn has been riding her bicycle downtown for seven years, but the festival in California initiated Quinn's journey to make cycling a fun and mainstream form of transportation in San Antonio.

"I'm trying to live a greener, healthier lifestyle," she said.

Main Plaza hopes other San Antonio residents are, too.

The nonprofit will also host the first annual **Bike | Beat** from 5-11 p.m. tomorrow at Main Plaza, marrying music, bikes, and awareness education. Imagine a more condensed **Siclovía**, without the riding space of a closed-down Broadway Street.

This free event's mission, which will include a variety of activities, bike-themed contests, vendors, and live music headlined by local band **Hacienda**, is to educate the community about bicycle safety and a "life on two wheels," Quinn said. "It's incredible that everyone is so stoked about getting healthy."

Click [here](#) or the image below for more information about **Bike / Beat**.



You can never be too careful – bring your bike lock and come early for Cycle-In Cinema to find a good spot to lock up your own "pedal power." Photo courtesy SATX Pedal Power / Edward Garcia.



Jordan Gass-Poore' is an English/mass communication senior at Texas State University- San Marcos. She began her work as a paid intern for The Rivard Report in June 2013. Her previous and current intern experience includes the [New Braunfels Herald](#)-

Zeitung, The Austin Chronicle, Slackerwood and the Austin American-Statesman, among others. If she's not writing or sitting outside of her favorite local coffee shop drinking a Shyster (a delicious espresso-sugar-dairy concoction), you can catch her watching episodes of her favorite television series, "Battlestar Galactica." Contact Jordan via jgasspoore@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @jgasspoore.

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119

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JORDAN GASS-POORE'

A former Rivard Report intern, Jordan Gass-Poore' is now interning at The Los Angeles News Group in California. She is an English/mass communication senior at Texas State University. She has also worked as a paid intern for LMG Communications. AT&T is a client of LMG Communications. Jordan's previous and current intern experience includes the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, The Austin Chronicle, Slackerwood and the Austin American-Statesman, among others. Contact Jordan via jgasspoore@gmail.com.

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JIM W on 2 August, 2013 at 15:54

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I think this is a great concept and I enjoyed going the other week with the kids. The bike powered projector may be a bit of a gimmick, though. I figure one of those projectors plus the sound system requires about 800 watts of power, but a fit athlete riding all-out can crank out barely 300 watts on a sustained basis. Then figure in efficiency losses in converting generator current to DC and then back to AC voltage. So really they must just be running on batteries that the rider is helping to slow the rate of discharge. I know, I know, I'm such a buzzkill.



IRIS DIMMICK on 2 August, 2013 at 16:00

[Reply](#)

Jim: Yes, it is "partially" powered by pedaling, as noted in this article. But it's the thought that counts, right? This is merely the beginning — maybe organizers will add more and more bikes to the system to make it more "pedal-power" legit. 😊

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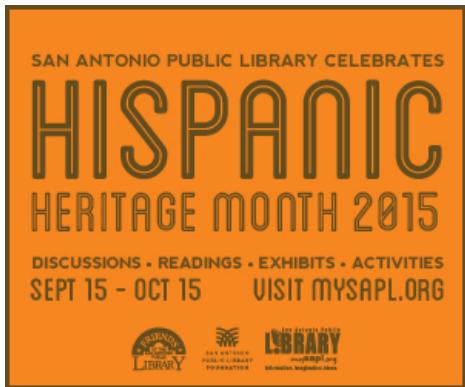
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It was such an honor to hear her speak, and to meet her even if it was just briefly. :)

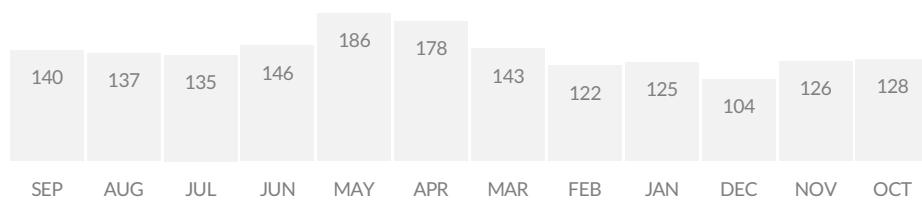
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