

# ORGANIC LIVING

By

Robert Rodale

The bicycle has been different things to different people — a toy for children, an exercise device for fitness enthusiasts, and a means of recreation for fun-lovers. Now the man-powered wheel is earning a new image entirely in this affluent country — a means of basic transportation.

Europeans and Asians have long realized that the bicycle is the most energy-efficient of all means of transportation. Movement of both people and goods by bicycle is important to the economy of many countries on those continents. With the spoked wheel and a few strokes of the legs, almost anyone can cover reasonable distances quickly — and have no gasoline bills to pay.

Americans aren't going to switch away from cars to people-powered transport overnight. But the current energy crunch has had an amazing impact on our attitudes and actions in a very short time, and the move toward cycling for shipping and commuting is bound to increase dramatically. Gasoline rationing will speed that trend even more.

One big problem here is that cars and trucks dominate our roadways to an incredible extent, leaving little room for cyclists. But there are a number of reasons why that situation is changing, creating new opportunities for the growth of cycling.

1. Money for separate bikeways is finally available. In defining the bicycle as a legitimate user of America's roadways, the Federal Highway Act of 1973 appropriated \$120 million to be used over the next three years for bikeway construction. Already California and Oregon have earmarked additional state funds to get the project rolling.

A bill calling for the creation of more than 7,000 miles of bicycle trails in the U. S. was introduced in the House recently by Representative Ralph S. Regula of Ohio.

2. The gasoline pinch has forced people to look for alternatives to the family car. Bicycles are suddenly attractive because drivers can leave the car in the garage occasionally, without sacrificing too much mobility. Neighborhood errands, shopping, and — in some cases — even commuting to work can be handled conveniently with a bicycle, provided distances aren't too great.

3. Bicycles fit into individual aspirations for a simpler lifestyle. Unlike an automobile, a bike can be maintained and

repaired by its owner with very little trouble or training. There are a number of good books on the market that explain everything you need to know about maintaining your bike — from adjusting the brakes to replacing a tire.

Costs aren't astronomical either. There's no comparison with the kind of financial headaches associated with owning an automobile. You can buy a quality 10-speed touring bicycle for less than the cost of routine repairs on a "luxury" car. And even major replacement items like tires and brakes are surprisingly inexpensive.

Bicycles aren't designed to be traded in every other year. There's little depreciation because styles don't change. The emphasis is on function and efficiency.

Bike sales have skyrocketed for a few years and there are signs that production is catching up with demand. But bicycle repair shops report a tremendous upswing in business since news of the energy crisis broke. Apparently



many people are finding long neglected bikes in basements and garages and having them reconditioned.

As the number of cyclists increases in coming months, here are some developments we may expect:

- Bikeways will be positioned near many major roadways. New highways will be constructed with special bike lanes as integral features.

- Look for multiple-use bikeways, particularly in northern states where harsh winters make year-round cycling difficult. Maine is considering a proposal that would utilize summer bikeways as winter avenues for cross-country skiers. Abandoned railroad beds and powerline right-of-ways are prime candidates for such multiple-use schemes.

- Bike racks will blossom near office buildings and shopping centers. Row on row of parked bikes are already a common sight at universities, especially in the West. But rack makers, in their trade journal ads, are now pushing for all sorts of municipal and corporate placements.

- Schools will start stressing bicycle safety education. We

may even see driver education courses expanded to include such material.

If you're driving less on weekends, why not invest some leisure time in gardening this year? "Help is on the Way" is an information-packed booklet that answers 86 of the most-asked questions about raising vegetables organically. It's available for fifty cents from Robert Rodale, Organic Living, in care of this newspaper. Be sure to ask for the booklet by name and allow about four weeks for delivery.

## Calendar

(Continued From Page 10)

Farmer, Hinkletown Elementary School.

7:30 p.m. - Stewartstown 4-H Community club meeting, Stewartstown Elementary School

Thursday, February 28

9:30 a.m. - 12 noon - York County 4-H Leaders beginning sewing workshop, York Co. 4-H Center.

12 Noon - Interstate Milk Producers Coop regular dinner meeting and business meeting, all locals of District 7. Hostetters Dining Hall, Mt. Joy.

7:00 p.m. - Wellsville 4-H Boots and Saddle Horse club meeting, Wellsville Fire Hall.

7:30 p.m. - Farm

Management meeting, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

Friday, March 1

7:00 p.m. - York County 4-H reporter meeting, 4-H office, Court House, York.

7:00 p.m. - Twin Valley FFA Banquet, Elverson Fire Hall.

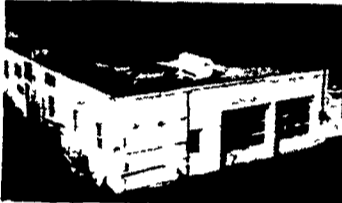
7:30 p.m. - Lancaster County-wide 4-H Horse club meeting, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

Manheim Young Farmers annual banquet, Manheim Central High School cafeteria

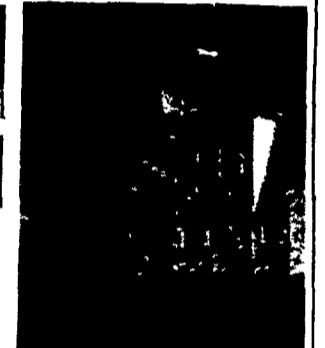
Saturday, March 2

9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. - Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York County 4-H Teen Leader workshop, St. James Lutheran Church, Gettysburg, Pa.

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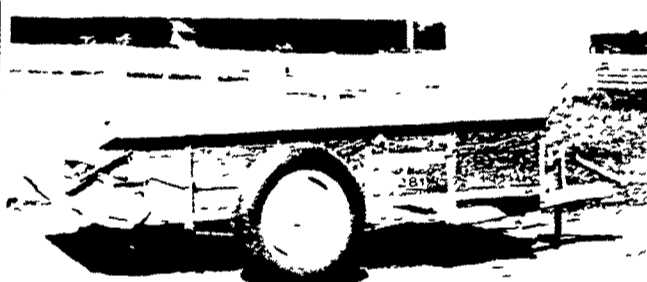
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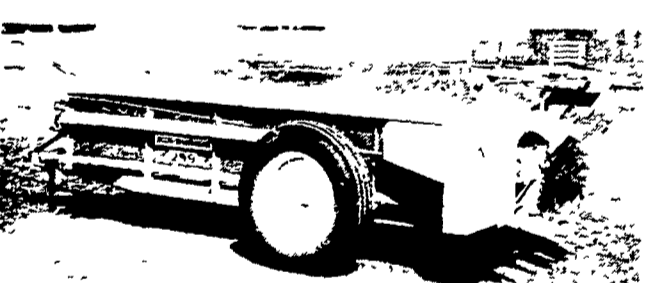
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