



BIKE HAPPENING

One of SLO's quirkiest events.

By SERENA LOPEZ

Every first Thursday of the month, after the farmers' market clears out, the bicycles pour in. Bike Happening, created by Mark Grayson and Dan Kallal in 2000, brings masses of people together to hop on a bike and ride the streets of Downtown San Luis Obispo.

Like most traditions in San Luis Obispo, Bike Happening stemmed from a desire to better the community. Grayson, wanting less cars on the road and more bikes, started gathering other bicycle

riders together. In 1998, Grayson, a collector of antique bikes, began riding around with friends on their two-wheeled collectables and inviting other antique riders and women to join in.

The Retro Ride also included a fashion show where women could flaunt their impeccable bike fashion. It was a gathering where people could ride their bikes casually and comfortably. As the Retro Ride grew to about one hundred people, Grayson coined the name "Bike Happening," in 2000.

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“Before I knew it, I had hundreds of people showing up,” Grayson said. “You throw a party and it happens to be on bikes, everyone wants to go.”

Grayson and Kallal established this event with three main tenets in mind: Bike Happening has to make the community

better, inspire people to get on a bike, and it has to be fun. Nineteen years later, Bike Happening gets people riding every month and attendance peaks at around 600 people during the school year.

“It’s super social,” Tim Wilkinson, a Bike Happening veteran, said. “In some ways, it’s like family, but in other ways it’s like any



Get Outside



other social event where you don't know who you're going to meet."

The monthly theme is another way people bond at Bike Happening. Before each ride, a theme is announced and people are welcome to dress up however they desire. While the crowd of wildly dressed bicyclists may be intimidating, Wilkinson said people look out for each other and look out for the community by making sure to clean up and leave no trace.

"The goal is people riding together and having a good time and being safe," Wilkinson said. "It's

been amazing to see the evolution from the first ride."

The ride has become an event where friends can catch up on their two-wheelers and newcomers can explore the adventure of bike riding in San Luis Obispo in a fun, safe environment. Bike Happening takes place every first Thursday of the month. Check out the Bike Happening San Luis Obispo Facebook Page to stay up to date.

Serena Lopez is a freelance writer pursuing a degree in journalism at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and a career in travel and lifestyle journalism.

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