

# Bike to Work Day an ordeal



**TOM ARNEBERG**  
Community columnist

Just in case you weren't aware, last week was "Bike to Work Week." Eau Claire celebrated with a kick-off party the morning of Tuesday, May 13, at Volume One World Headquarters near Phoenix Park.

I ride right by there on my daily bike commute, so I was excited to read about the free coffee and snacks, bicycle exhibitions, and other fun-sounding plans. Even the cloudy, cold and windy weather couldn't hamper this event.

But trouble was lurking. After I crossed the North Crossing bike lane bridge, I heard a weird sound from my rear wheel. I stopped momentarily and adjusted the pannier carrying my laptop. Sometimes it gets loose and can rub against the wheel.

As soon as I started riding again, something just didn't feel right. That's when I realized my fate: **FLAT TIRE!**  
I hate flat tires. Especially when I'm far from home and racing to get to an important event like the Bike to Work Week Kickoff.

My first thought was that the mighty Arnebus, our conversion van that can hold multiple bikes, was at school, and David,

even though he's now 18 years old (and one week!), still can't escape Chi-Hi to pick me up. Fortunately, I bought a bike rack last year for the car. Unfortunately, Beth was substitute-teaching at Christ Lutheran School that day. So getting rescued by the wife was out, too.

Well, I guess I'll have to just change the stinkin' tire. I walked my bike about a half a mile to the Holiday gas station on Birch Street so I'd have a place to wash my hands after I did the dirty deed. That's when I discovered more bad news: The spare tube that I always carry in my handlebar bag was the **WRONG SIZE!**

It was time to give up the idea of stopping at Volume One. Now I just had to figure out how to get to work ... and then back home later that night. I really wanted to go to David's tennis match at Eau Claire North High School that afternoon, which is about halfway home and right on my bike route. But if I somehow made it to work and then caught a ride home to Chippewa Falls that evening with a coworker, I'd have to miss the match.

I posted a plea on Facebook asking if anyone was going by my area, either to Eau Claire or Chippewa Falls. I was surprised to hear **NOTHING** — not even snide comments. (I found out later that I had mistakenly posted to Simon's **SOCCKER TEAM** page, not to my main Facebook wall. This was just not my day.)

As a last resort, I figured I'd



**TOM ARNEBERG, CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**  
Sean Brandenburg, owner of the Eau Claire Mobile Bicycle Repair company, helped Tom repair his bike on Bike to Work Day.

just call a cab. (Why aren't there tow trucks for bicycles?) That's when I realized my last big problem — for only the second time in all my bike commuting, I had **FORGOTTEN MY WALLLET!** When it rains, it pours.

So here I am, stuck about seven miles from work and eight miles from home, flat tire and no wallet. Then I realized that there **ARE** some bike stores in Eau Claire. I am so spoiled by the amazing Spring Street Sports in downtown Chippewa Falls that I forgot that there must be stores in a town the size of Eau Claire, too.

Maybe there would be some bike store representatives at

sugar donut holes to go with them.  
But the best part was meeting Sean Brandenburg, owner of the Eau Claire Mobile Bicycle Repair company. I didn't even know there **WAS** such a thing, but we have one right here in western Wisconsin. That's even better than a tow truck for bikes, since he'll actually fix your bike on the spot.

And that's exactly what he did. While I was busy talking to Chippewa Falls native Jessie (Long) Andress, Sean had my bike up on the stand, removed the wheel, and had a new tube on in no time.

My prospects instantly improved — I could finish the ride to work, and still get to the tennis match at North! When I told Sean I didn't have any money, he trusted me to mail him a check. How much? He quoted me five bucks for the new tube. Needless to say, I sent him a lot more than that — he saved my day (and restored my faith in humanity!).

My terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day had suddenly transformed into a pretty cool day, thanks to Volume One, Starbucks and Sean Brandenburg.

I was in a good mood as I rolled into work, only to discover that my badge that activates the door lock was in the same place as my billfold — in a nice ziploc bag on my bedroom dresser.

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