



OCTOBER IS FULL OF ACTIVITY. GET READY TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT!

Walk to School Day AND Month!

Thousands of Missouri school-children will walk and bike to school during National Walk & Bike to School Month (October) and on International Walk to School Day, Wednesday, October 5th. Walking or biking to school improves student health, reduces pollution and congestion, and strengthens communities by creating more livable streets. Many schools have used Walk to School Day events to start the process of improving the community so that students *can* walk and bike to school. Many communities have used Walk to School Events to engage community leaders, highlight problems and challenges, and get the wheels rolling to improve the environment for bicycling and walking around the school. If you are interested in organizing a Walk to School event at SLLIS, please contact sonia@sllis.org.

Open Streets 2011/Cyclovia

The second annual Open Streets events are scheduled for two Saturdays in October. Open Streets will feature several miles of St. Louis City roads that will be closed to cars but open to pedestrians and cyclists. The event originated in Colombia with the name *Cyclovia*; there is also a *Cyclovia* in Belgium, so we'll dub our SLLIS celebration *Cyclovia*, too! The second Open Streets event, on October 29th, will wind through the Grove neighborhood, down Sarah Street. SLLIS will be an Activity Hub and feature activities such as yoga, dance, and soccer drills. Open Streets are two days of the year when city streets are open for people to enjoy and explore – an opportunity to experience the St. Louis by foot or bicycle. There will be SLLIS group bicycle rides for riders of all levels. This is a great chance to be active, meet new neighbors, and celebrate the fall season. Be

sure to come out and support SLLIS at *Cyclovia*!

After-School Activity Update

After-school activity registration for the Thanksgiving through Winter Break “mini- session” will open *next week*. Registration forms will be sent home in your child’s backpack, as well as emailed in PDF form, and enrollment will be on a *first-come-first-served basis*. All registration forms should be returned to school in your child’s back-pack or placed in the PA drop-box or mailbox in the front lobby.

Interested in hosting an intern next

semester? Contact

sllispainterns@gmail.com.

Let us know if you are not receiving this newsletter by email or if your email address changes. Email sonia@sllis.org.

In honor of Fall, National Walk & Bike to School Month (October), and *Cycloviva*, the Assistant Head of School shares an experience about living in France, staying active, & treading new ground on a bicycle. Active bodies make active minds! What does your family do to stay active? Tell us about it. Send your family's favorite ways to "move it" to sonia@sllis.org and find out what other families do to stay active in the next edition of the French School Newsletter.

My first day at *Lycee* (highschool) *Albert Thomas* in Roanne, France, I put a note on the announcement board in the teacher's lounge: Does anyone have a spare bicycle to lend the American assistant? She's far from home and missing her trusty, rusty red Schwinn.

I got a response right away but the bike was much too small, resulting in a sore back and bottom region. Deflated, I tried to convince myself that walking's just as good. But it felt like I was missing a limb.

Everything changed on November 11, which – surprise! – the French take as a national holiday. The timing gods gave me a nudge mid-morning and I decided to take out the recycling. On the way down, I ran into my downstairs neighbor, Michel, cleaning out the storage room. Michel is handsome with wavy, gray hair, quiet and always smiling a calm, closed-lip smile. We were chatting about the odds and ends in the room and I made a comment about the gorgeous bike, a shiny black Peugeot, leaning against the wall. I mentioned that I was borrowing a teacher's bike but that it was too small and hurt *mes fesses* (in French we have plural bottoms). He responded just as I had hoped: Well, this one's mine but I never use it, would you like to borrow it? Before he could blink an *oeil* I shouted Yes!

Experiences like these are sweet rewards for stepping out into the world and meeting neighbors – I wonder how many good people and bikes are waiting to be discovered. This particular bike has a boy's frame (equality begins with a girl riding a boy's bicycle), a bell, thin tires with fenders to keep the mud off *mes fesses*, and cruiser handlebars.

The weekend saw sunshine and leaves of all imaginable shades of red, orange, and yellow hovering between hanging onto the branches and falling softly to the ground. I had no choice: the weather gods pushed me out the door and onto that bicycle.

I convinced the Chinese assistant to ride with me along a footpath hugging a canal of the Loire River. Within a few miles of leaving Roanne, we entered farmlands and passed pastures with cows and sheep grazing, front yards with chickens and ducks playing alongside children on swing sets, and bright green vegetable gardens. Women hanging laundry on clotheslines waved as we rode by. While gazing absentmindedly at the cows, I realized that what appeared as a bunch of cows munching happily was actually an entire industry at work – the cows in this region are raised for their meat. The countryside was at once serene and awesome in its functionality.

We passed spandex-clad cyclists and whole families on bikes. I beamed at them and sang *Bonjour!* Our destination was not set and I pushed us farther until our stomachs declared it to be lunchtime. We stopped at a little brick hut with a pool inside, constructed as a place for women to do laundry, back before girls rode boys' bikes.

The ride home proved a bit trickier, as *Tine*, my bike partner, had one pedal that was threatening to fall off. Luckily she had a roll of Scotch tape in her bag so we wrapped the pedal in tape and, miracle of miracles, it held until we reached home. Lesson learned – never leave home without Scotch.

Sunday morning I woke up early and hit the road again, this time as a lone rider. Seeing a path on my map, I thought I'd follow a small tributary of the Loire called *La Renaison*.

I had had trouble finding the path's entrance so stopped a friendly-looking gentleman to ask, where's this path, eh? He pointed me in the right direction and said to follow the river. When I thanked him, he heard my accent and asked the customary, "You speak *Eeng-leesh*?" I said yes and smiled as he re-stated his directions: "You follow *zees rheeever*, you no looze *yorch-self!*"

This path was bumpy and took me through some woods. I enjoyed the shadows of the tree cover and the crunching and crackling acorns, fallen leaves, and branches under my tires. I passed people jogging and walking their dogs, and like the day before, everyone was in high spirits. If people still offered sacrifices, the weather gods would have been feasting on cheese all weekend.

The path ended and I found a country road, *Chemin des Moulins* (mills path) that was smoother and, it being Sunday morning, free of car traffic. I rode toward the rolling hills surrounding Roanne, past more pastures filled with cows and bulls who were perfectly content to graze all day long. Cruising past, I remarked how happy I was to be a gal on a bicycle.

And with that, I think I hear my neighbor knocking.

Roanne is in the Rhone-Alps region of France, in the Loire River Department.



IMPORTANT INFO

- Mondays are formal days at The French School.
- School begins at 8:40. The doors open at 8:15.
- Parents must make changes in the dismissal plans of their students prior to 2:00.
- Each student has been issued a student ID. This should go to school with your student.
- Please do NOT park on Papin St. during dismissal.
- AMIGOS Y AMIS ends November 18th (this semester).

IMPORTANT DATES

- 10/4 Parents Assembly meeting, 6 p.m.
- 10/5 National Walk to School Day
- 10/9 Meet the Interns, 2p.m.-4p.m.
- 10/14 First Quarter Ends
- 10/20-21 No School: Professional Development
- 10/31 Parent/Teacher Conferences