



Keep right and think of the honking as background music of the city.

Take a *Bike*

by Bri Kilroy | photo by Two Eagles Marcus

Traffic jams, finding parking, gas prices and navigating a vehicle through crowded streets can cause more anxiety than enjoyment, especially during a Grand Rapids event as big as ArtPrize. Johannah Jelks' elixir: choose a bicycle as your method of transportation.



Johannah Jelks

Jelks is the Creator and Marketing Manager of "She Rides Her Own Way," a campaign that started in May 2014 designed to build self-esteem and bring health awareness to women.

"I really wanted to encourage women and healthy living," says Jelks with an outgoing energy. She credits her excitement to her passion and the peace of mind biking gives her.

Since Grand Rapids installed its first half-mile bike lane four years ago, we've seen more cyclists around the Downtown Grand Rapids Business District. With over 34 miles of bike lanes added throughout the city, bike trail expansions and bike racks lining the streets, Grand Rapids has earned its spot in the top 50 bike-friendly cities.

In addition, knowing the bicycle rules of the road can ease some of the trepidation that comes with commuting by bike. Rule of Wheel: follow the same rules as motor vehicles. That means stopping at stoplights and signs, yielding to pedestrians and other bicyclists, using proper hand signals when turning, and staying off the sidewalk.

When riding in a street without a marked bike lane, keep as far to the right as possible. If an impatient motorist honks at you for being in the way, don't sweat it. The car horn is designed to ensure safe vehicle operation, not to scold bikers out of frustration. We can't do much about honking, but unless you are creating a dangerous situation, you're not breaking any laws. Keep right and think of the honking as background music of the city.

Part of Jelks' mission is to make sure bicycle resources are accessible to women wherever they may be in life. Jelks explains that there are different types of bikes for different types of riders and "putting your personality into your bike" makes the experience more enjoyable. Jelks finds her most personality-nurturing helmets at Nutcase Helmets, an online boutique that offers quality helmets coated with fresh designs so you can express yourself while protecting your head.

Peace of mind, energy, and exceptional leg toning—what's keeping you from swapping the car keys for a helmet? If you answered, "helmet hair," Jelks has some tips for that.

When it comes to protecting your head from helmet hair:

- Make sure your hair is pulled back (it keeps it from getting tangled and keeps the back of your neck cool)

- Have your hair styled in a way that is secure and safe
- Create a deep side part and gather hair at the bottom for a hairstyle that won't be disrupted by your helmet
- Fill your scalp with twisty braids, looking pretty while staying secure
- Work dry shampoo into your roots to soak up excess oil or sweat while you ride
- A scarf or a head wrap effortlessly disguises helmet hair

There are several resources (see list below) that offer cycle-style beyond headgear from cool bikes to chic accessories, and don't forget our local bike shops. The Spoke Folks is a non-profit bike co-op that offers refurbished bikes, replacement parts, tools, education and a knowledgeable staff that are happy to help you find the right ride for your lifestyle. Freewheeler, Central District Cyclery and the Ada Bike Shop provide everything from products to services so that you can put the same care into your bike as you do yourself.

This fall season, experience downtown from a bike seat and join the growing, diverse community that is propelled by its own power. As for the money you save on gas, how about some new jeans to go with those toned legs? Keep cycling, Grand Rapids, and watch out for car doors.

Bodacious Bike Sites:

- www.PublicBikes.com
- www.BobbinBikes.co.uk
- www.VeloVixen.com
- www.TheSpokeFolks.org
- www.NutcaseHelmets.com
- www.Facebook.com/SheRidesHerOwnWay