

Newport *this week*

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A Buzz About Bikes



On behalf of Bike Newport, Liza Burkin presents the Preservation Society of Newport County with the Bicycle Friendly Business of the Year Award - a gilded penny farthing created by artist Howard Newman to Laura Murphy and Jan Doda of the Preservation Society. (Photo by Lori Bates)

Friday, May 16, marked Bike Newport's fourth annual celebration of International Bike to Work Day. From the commuter Bbreakfast in the morning to the community city loop ride in the afternoon, Washington Square was abuzz with bikes and cyclists.

James Reed, executive director of the Newport Housing Authority, used the occasion to announce that Bike Newport will be moving its Bike Garage North inside the Florence Gray Center, where it can engage youth and families yearround regardless of the weather. The Bike Garage North brings bicycles, bike riding classes, and bike maintenance training to the youth of Newport's North End. Every Saturday, the doors of a storage container open to reveal bikes to borrow, earn and adopt. Young people work on tires, chains and cables, and hop in the saddle to ride the roads of the neighborhood and the trails of Miantonomi Park. The Bike Garage North is run by Bike Newport, supported by funding from the Frederick H. Prince Memorial Fund, and now has a long-term partner in the Newport Housing Authority. "This program is a model of bringing exciting activity and valuable skills to the community," remarked Reed. Mark Chesterton, Bike Newport's director of education, was thrilled with the announcement. "We can

now operate all year without concern for weather. It's wonderful and welcome news. And we're very grateful to Jim and the Housing Authority for this exciting step in growing the program."

The program pinnacle was the crowning of the second annual "Bicycle Friendly Business of the Year." The distinction was awarded to the Preservation Society of Newport County for its support of biking by providing bike racks at every mansion property; encouraging employees to bicycle for fun, fitness and transportation; supporting community bicycle education by providing space and resources; helping to fund and distribute the Newport Bicycle Map; and for being a model partner in all regards since Bike Newport began its efforts to improve and encourage bicycling in 2011. "For these reasons and more, the staff, board, and volunteers of Bike Newport have selected the Preservation Society of Newport County as the Bicycle Friendly Business of the Year," announced Executive Director, Bari Freeman.

The unique award is a gilded penny farthing – crafted by Newport sculptor and cycling enthusiast Howard Newman, and his wife/collaborator, Mary Newman. Aptly, the penny farthing bicycle was a symbol of the late Victorian era, the period that saw the heyday of most of the Preservation Society's Gilded Age mansions.

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