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By Kevin Protz



## Learn To Dance Like the President!

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"If you don't buy my personal 'make you dance better' Digital Visual De... Di... Dividend... then consider yourself one of them terrorists..."  
-Gee Dub

## OPINION

# Beauty is skin-deep, and so is the color of skin

By SANDEEP ABRAHAM  
Staff writer

The days are finally getting warmer, and I know this not just from my sweat-drenched socks or the blinding glare on my windshield in the afternoon, but also from the aches and groans of sunburned youth. Those paler, more "pigmentally" challenged individuals find themselves overjoyed at the opportunity to deepen their complexion, but not too much. Those who dwell on the other end of the color spectrum despise the sun and

its determination to make them darker. But just what is wrong with being darker? I'm always amused when I hear the responses people have to this question. Most laugh it off, as if the answer was obvious or as if answering truthfully would destroy the façade of political correctness they've worked so hard at maintaining.

But don't worry. As a person of color myself, I understand where you're coming from. We, as a society, are constantly bombarded with images of porcelain beauty. Of course, this isn't to say that darker

models and celebrities don't exist. On the contrary, they have gained more notoriety in the last few decades and their beauty has been acknowledged. However, darker skin is still seen as some sort of forbidden fruit, something everyone sees as exotic and sensual, but wouldn't really go for if they had a choice. A hundred and forty two years after slavery, I am amazed that such unspoken preferences still exist. Well, no, I'm not really all that amazed. Even the symbols in our society provide hints of this. The color black usually brings to mind

images of funerals, death, sadness and desolation. Yet, it also brings to mind images of sensuous lingerie and dark chocolate. Apparently, this concept applies to and among human beings as well.

Maybe I am off-base and people simply don't want to get darker because it might lead to skin cancer. That's understandable, but that doesn't explain why some dark-skinned people seek skin lightening treatments and techniques. Frankly, I think this is a way of thinking instilled in us at a young age, be it through what we see in

the media, what our friends may do or say even through the example our parents set. Then, when we hit adolescence (here's looking at you, ladies), we start buying all sorts of cosmetic products designed to make us look fair and appealing. It makes me think of a caged Hansel force-fed to fatten up for the feast of a blind, cannibalistic witch in a candy-coated house.

If this makes any sort of dent in your perception of yourself or of others, please let it sink in and realize – yes, this is clichéd – that beauty is only skin deep.

# The bike has been invented -- did you know?

By ERIC DORMAN  
Features editor

Suppose I told you that I had designed an inexpensive vehicle that would transport you the same places a car would, but for a small fraction of the price. Suppose that unlike a car, this vehicle needed no fuel and had zero carbon emissions. Then, as an added bonus, not only would this vehicle get you to where you needed to go, but it would also help you shed pounds, tone muscle and increase your endurance en route to your destination.

Intrigued? Well, as much as I would like to claim ownership of this particular piece of intellectual property, it's actually already been invented. It's called a bicycle.

At the risk of sounding romantic, the bicycle is America's last undiscovered gem of transportation. It's simple conceptually—two wheels, two pedals, with a metal chain connecting them—but brilliant in execution. As much as 90 percent of the power applied to the pedals is transmitted to forward movement, making it the most efficient self-propelled mode of transportation available.

Not only are bicycles efficient

in terms of energy, but they are efficient in terms of money as well. No \$3 gas or upkeep fees to pay for. Just oil your chain every now and then, and you're good to go.

Still, America doesn't seem to be catching on to the benefits of riding on two wheels. Despite the fact that the number of bikes today numbers approximately 1 billion and worldwide bicycle use has climbed steadily, particularly in Asia (China alone has 500 million bikes), the number of bicycle sales in America has declined over the past 10 years.

Interestingly enough, over that same period of time, American

auto sales have grown rapidly, as has the exercise machine industry, which was worth an impressive \$3.8 billion in 2004. It seems that rather than simply riding their bikes to the grocery store, today Americans must step into their GMC Yukons and Denalis in order to get to the Stairmaster at 24 Hour Fitness.

Creating a bike-friendly environment is by no means impossible, and carries substantial health benefits. The inhabitants of the Netherlands take about 30 percent of their daily trips by bike—compared with America's lowly 1 percent—and their health statistics reflect that. The Netherlands's obesity rate is at

10 percent. America's rate is three times that.

It would be fair to say that Uncle Sam has not done his full share toward promoting bike use in America. Between 1998 and 2003, the government spent \$600 million a year on bicycle projects—a sizable sum, to be sure, but little more than a drop in the bucket compared to the \$2 billion in tax breaks the U.S. government gives the oil industry every year. Such little funding for bicycles is definitely a mistake. Encouraging light, road-friendly bikes could ultimately save billions of dollars in road upkeep fees over

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## CAMPUS COMMENT >>

# Why are you taking classes at Ohlone?



**WALTER CHU**  
Singing

"My friends are here, and there's more opportunities than Chabot."



**CARLOS SMOTHERS**  
Undecided

"My mom's a counselor here. She helps me pick my classes."



**ANDRE BISHOP**  
Business

"The business program and the music classes."



**JACKIE RICH**  
Undecided

"My mom wanted me to go here."



**JENNIFER HAVIS**  
Undecided

"It's easy to get an AA and transfer here."