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**It's the wheel deal on Tour de l'Ile**  
30,000 cyclists pedaled 45 kilometres as part of yesterday's annual Tour de l'île. Participants ranged from a 13-month-old in his first outing and a couple riding in tandem for their 18th year in a row

**Charlie Fidelman**  
The Gazette  
June 7, 2004

If Dominique didn't utter a word yesterday during the first Tour de l'île of his life, it wasn't for lack of enthusiasm.



Manuel has the best seat in the house, atop Denis Langlois's shoulders.  
CREDIT: ANDRE PICHETTE, THE GAZETTE

But the 13-month-old boy nodded off at the start and slept through the 45-kilometre tour - past musicians, happy noisemakers, volunteers with megaphones and cheering residents lining the streets.

"You can say that he liked it very much," father Patrick Yale said back at the starting point, Laurier Park, where festivities ended in the late afternoon.

The family was among 30,000 bicyclists passing through 15 Montreal boroughs during the popular 20th annual tour.

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But it's a good thing the chariot came with built-in springs, because the roads are "full of holes," said Martine Blouin, who pulled the child behind her bike.

"I wanted the extra challenge," she explained. "We do a lot of biking and we thought it would a fun thing to do as a family. It was very enjoyable - we'll be back next year."

Claude Germain and his wife, Helen Matheas, have always done the tour on a bicycle built for two.

"That's because the missus isn't solid enough to go alone. And this way she never loses sight of me," Germain quipped about his wife of 31 years.

The tour has been their tradition for the past 18 years. This year was no different; he's in the front seat, she takes the rear. The secret to two people cycling as one is the same as "in a good marriage," he said.

This tour was an easy ride, she said, nothing at all like when the outing stretched around the island and covered about 76 kilometres.

The couple recalled the long route with nostalgia, even under terribly rainy conditions. "My teeth were chattering in the wet cold. We ate soggy sandwiches. I'll never forget that," she said.

The trip was cut to 45 kilometres to make it more family-friendly, festival spokesperson Patrick Howe said.

But those wishing a tougher ride should sign up for cycling events called Summer Defi, each with distances varying from 75



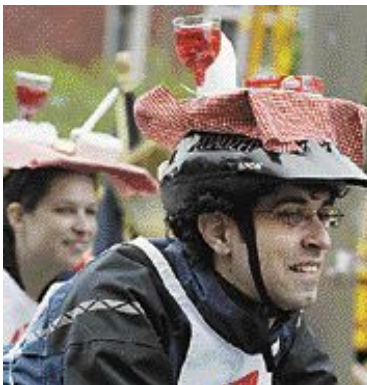
Not all vehicles were two-wheelers at yesterday's event.

CREDIT: ANDRE PICHETTE, THE GAZETTE



As of yesterday, one million cyclists have taken part in 20 years of cycling events, including the Tour de l'ile, Tour des enfants and Tour du nuit.

CREDIT: ANDRE PICHETTE, THE GAZETTE



to 150 kilometres.

Yesterday marked one million cyclists involved in cycling events since the first bike fest was launched 20 years ago, including the Tour des enfants and Tour du nuit.

Among the most popular tents at Laurier Park, including the lemonade, milk and hotdog stands, was the one offering free massages. Lineups for 10-minute massages lasted a half hour, about the time it took to move toward one of the few portable toilets along the route.

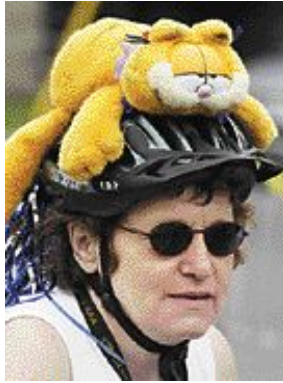
For information on the Defi events: [www.velo.qc.ca](http://www.velo.qc.ca)

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Safety first: Cyclists were in a celebratory mood as they rode through 15 Montreal boroughs yesterday. Free massages were offered at Laurier Park after the event.

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