

Just another day at the office.



LIFE'S WORK

moved to northwestern Connecticut to start a new job. The gig turned out to be not so great, but the commute was marvelous: 18 back-road miles through a 3-D Norman Rockwell painting of hills, lakes, rivers, farms, steeples, mills and more.

But nothing is perfect. I was the first bike commuter in the company's 25-year history, so my colorful spandex and skinny tires were instantly a frequent and favorite subject of office humor. After a month or so, though, one coworker dusted off his 20-year-old Fuji and joined me for a weekend ride. Not long afterward, he began commuting to work and the Fuji was soon replaced by a shiny new Cannondale.

When the New England winter set in, we started riding mountain bikes at lunch. Our colleagues saw this as one more opportunity for ridicule—until the day one of them brought a rusty, old mountain bike to work and joined us. Soon another signed up. And another. As the weather brightened, so did the office. Those old beaters gave way to sleek, new road bikes, and our spins at lunch evolved into wicked-fast training rides. I considered it a success that I was often the first one dropped. And one day, almost five years after I started, I found myself unable to walk through the hallway that led to the building's loading dock because of all the bicycles that were in the way. I knew that my work there was finished, and that I was needed elsewhere. I began looking for a new job.—*Tom O'Brien*

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