



# Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World

*Allan Drummond*

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## **Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World** Allan Drummond

Bikes rule the road in Amsterdam today, but that wasn't always the case. In the 1970's, Amsterdam was so crowded with vehicles that bicyclists could hardly move, but moms and kids relied on their bikes to get around the city. PEDAL POWER is the story of the people who led protests against the unsafe streets and took over a vehicles-only tunnel on their bikes, showing what a little pedal power could do! Author and illustrator Allan Drummond returns with the story of the people that paved the way for safe biking around the world.

## **Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World Details**

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Author : Allan Drummond

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## **From Reader Review Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World for online ebook**

### **Katie Lalor says**

I enjoyed the theme of this true story- Even though their community was not successful at first, they kept with it a voiced new ideas to give bicyclists more room on the road. It was nice that even children helped impact this change. The illustrations were pretty too!

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### **Donalyn says**

I love all of Allan Drummond's books about what ordinary people can do to make our planet a better place. This book describes the efforts to increase bicycle use and safety in the Netherlands.

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### **Barbara says**

As he did so effectively in the previous eco-friendly titles, *Energy Island* and *Green City*, Allan Drummond highlights the efforts of folks just like you and me who take action to change the world. In this case, the setting is Amsterdam in the 1970s as the city streets became increasingly congested and unsafe for bicyclists. An ordinary citizen Maartje Rutten notices the problem and decides to take action so that she and her son and others who preferred to travel by bicycle could do so safely. The determined woman starts a grassroots campaign, which grows exponentially after the death of a child cyclist. Although the path to change is described in simplistic fashion, the story itself is still inspiring since Amsterdam is now known as the bicycle capital of the world. As the text and illustrations demonstrate, other cities followed this one's lead, making their streets more bike-friendly and even offering bikes for use by visitors. The colorful illustrations, clean lines, and plentiful white space add to this picture book's visual appeal. Without a doubt, it has many classroom uses, including one on energy, conservation, and green themes. The example of one mother who wanted to make the world a safer place for the son is an excellent one for young readers. Like me, they might feel like cheering when she leads a band of protesters on bikes into the underground tunnel intended only for cars. Can one person make a difference in the world? This book provides a vivid example of how someone did just that.

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### **Gary Anderson says**

*Pedal Power* has a nice balance of whimsy and message as it shows how bicycling advocate Maartje Rutten led Amsterdam to become the world's foremost biking city. Although the words and pictures have light touches, author Allan Drummond delivers important content about the benefits of cycling and the power of activism.

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## **Cindy Mitchell \*Kiss the Book\* says**

Drummond, Allan Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World. PICTURE BOOK. FSG (Macmillan), 2017. \$18.

In the 1970's cars were taking over the roads of Amsterdam and making life very dangerous for the bicyclists. After it came out the over 500 children had died in bike vs car accidents, Maartje Rutten and other concerned citizens started a series of protests to get the government to change the laws and the roads to make life safer for cyclists. The Dutch idea has slowly started to spread to other big cities.

Having spent almost two year biking around the Netherlands myself, I am a big fan of bike power. This book is also a good example of a citizen-led change for better.

EL – ADVISABLE. Cindy, Library Teacher  
<http://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2017/...>

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## **Lynn says**

Presents reasonable arguments for the use of bicycles, but I'd like to see at least one page to balance the cautions, or 'however's'. For example, bikes can reduce but not eliminate other forms of transportation (I'd be hard pressed to bike 26 miles in Maine winters to work!), and delivery trucks still have their place (what if I'm shopping for a refrigerator, and how do all those food supplies get to the store?). Readers need to be able to see both sides of such issues. It's always hard to see any other side when children die, but we need to teach youngsters to think then act rather than react on an emotional level.

Although I agree with all the arguments FOR bicycling, I do wonder how it works in Amsterdam during the short, cold, winter days! This could be used to have students investigate various places around the world and why biking is better, or when it is not feasible, as well as examine other ways to keep children safe!

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## **Lisa says**

In the 1970's, the city of Amsterdam was mostly cars and it was dangerous to ride a bike, but when bicycle advocates like Maartje Rutten started speaking up, organizing protests, holding parties and bike rides, the media started listening. Today, there are more bikes than cars on the roads in Amsterdam. It's a safe place to ride. It's also great for the environment! Small chunks of text placed in between strips of illustrations mirror the traffic problems in Amsterdam. A perfect way to present this story - includes an author's note (with photographs - I love that!) and a bibliography.

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## **Melki says**

Drummond, a cycling fan, tells the story of Maartje Rutten, and her drive to take Amsterdam away from motor vehicles, and make the roads safer for bicyclists.

As you can see . . . it worked.

This is a nice power-to-the-people story, and proof that making noise can make a difference.

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### **Becky B says**

The story of how Amsterdam changed its laws regarding bicycles and made bicycling more popular.

An interesting look at how traffic reform happened in one city. I found this book a teensy bit pretentious in that it suggests that Amsterdam's reforms of traffic laws in favor of bicycles revolutionized the *whole* world and was solely responsible for great bicycle usage in any other towns. That's just not true, especially in Asia where heavy bicycle usage happened well before Amsterdam's reform. So a good look at how to go about changing laws in nonviolent ways, but not very globally informed.

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### **Gordon says**

In this day and age when bicycling takes place in so many urban areas, and bicycles themselves are made available to the public, it might be difficult to imagine a time when cyclists had a tough time finding space among automobiles. ***Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World***, by Allan Drummond, recounts the story of when cyclists in the city of Amsterdam campaigned to gain rights among the increasingly high volume of motor vehicles. Told in a very straightforward manner with simple illustrations, the story is very informative.

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### **Edward Sullivan says**

The story of how Amsterdam led the way in becoming a bicycle-friendly city and inspired other big cities to do the same.

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### **Lynn says**

Somehow I assumed that Amsterdam was always a bicycle city but not so! Interesting story of how bicyclists reclaimed their city from ferocious car and truck traffic.

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### **Jana says**

This interesting nonfiction picture book shows young readers how the power of organized protests led to much safer streets for bicyclists in Amsterdam. Fifty years ago the streets of Amsterdam were crowded with cars and trucks and bicycling was very dangerous. Maartje Rutten and her friends and neighbors worked very hard to get that changed. Colorful illustrations and informative author notes and resources make this a good nonfiction resource to have on the bookshelf and a good starting point for further research.

## **Cynthia Daniels says**

This story deftly tells how people can change the perspective the city officials who don't believe that bicycles should be ridden in city streets with automobiles and gasoline powered vehicles. One woman alone was instrumental in changing the societal views about bicycling in the capital city of Amsterdam. Maartje Rutten took on the challenge of changing the city by making them understand that "cities need bikes! Bikes make city life better. Not only is riding a bike something that can make you healthier, you can see so much more of the city on a bicycle. Maartje decided that a group of organized riders would take over a tunnel reserved for gasoline powered vehicles and when they were arrested, it seemed strange that all the bike riders were treated to lemonade and cookies and the policemen were smiling just a little bit. People came up with extensive ideas to assist bike riders all over the city by creating bike lanes and new laws for bike riders. People listened and changed their ways. Now bicycle riders can be found in Tokyo, New York City, China, Paris, France, London, Chicago and more. The primary reason for the change was because 500 children were killed in automobile related deaths and the realization that bikes are quiet, take up little road space, don't pollute the air and doesn't need fuel. This book is ideal for school libraries, it shows the power of one person's idea and how their ideas can become reality.

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## **Martha says**

The author of Energy Island, and Green City has come up with another fascinating topic in Pedal Power. Everyone knows that Amsterdam is the city of bicycles, but why is that so? Apparently back in the 1970's, although people traveled by bicycles a lot, a young girl was killed by a car. It turns out her father was a news reporter, and after doing some research, he discovered 500 children were killed on the road that year, many of them riding bicycles. He wrote about the tragedy of his daughter. Protests in Amsterdam had already begun, as the bicyclist realized that with more, and more cars, they didn't have enough space to travel on the road. But Vic Langenhoff's article was the catalyst necessary to make people angry, and for Maartje v Putten to lead a dangerous and brave bicycling protest which many, many people participated in, pedaling through the tunnel of their city. The protest worked, through Maartje's skillful protesting and planning, Amsterdam became the city of bicycles, leading the way for other large cities to follow. Illustrated with lively watercolor and ink illustrations, and a comprehensive Author's Note about the true history of Maartje's pioneering movement, this will make a great read aloud.

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