

PATTY ZUBOV, FEBRUARY 26, 2013

“I believe ‘Park and Pedal’ commuting, or multi-modal commuting, will become a substantial part of the near term transportation future.”

Over 25 years ago, when Dave Montague was a grad student in aerospace engineering at MIT, his father, Harry Montague, a Washington, D.C. architect and inventor, asked him to collaborate on a travel-friendly high-performance bicycle. Together they formed the Montague Corporation, headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to design and build full-size, high-performance bicycles that fold.

Montague folding mountain bikes have since gone on to blaze many trails and win numerous design awards. While most other folding bikes have small wheels, Montague folding bikes have standard 26” wheels. These are full-size bikes that can fold to 36”x28”x12” and fit in a closet or in the trunk of a car.

Montague bikes were featured in the closing ceremonies of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The company got a big boost the following year when they won a grant from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) – the US government agency that helped develop the internet – to create a durable, stealth transportation alternative to the military’s heavy mechanized vehicles.

The product of the DARPA grant was the Paratrooper Folding Tactical Mountain Bicycle. A paratrooper can jump out of military aircraft with the folded bike and upon landing, unfold it to a full-size mountain bike in 20 seconds. This is human-powered transportation, not reliant on gasoline or electric charge. It’s sturdy enough to handle the rugged terrain soldiers encounter, and with a low thermal and acoustic radar signature, super stealthy to boot. “They don’t see you coming!” quips Dave Montague.

Demand by civilians for this bike means the Paratrooper folding mountain bike is now available to consumers around the world. “With our bikes,” Montague says, “people can drive part way to work, park, and ride the rest of the way. I believe ‘Park and Pedal’ commuting, or multi-modal commuting, will become a substantial part of the near term transportation future.”

The Montague Corporation makes 10 different folding bike models with the same folding technology for two “environments” – mountain and pavement – ranging from about \$650 to \$3000. And new this year, Montague is marketing the bike frame alone – hand-made with the same aircraft grade aluminum – so riders and manufacturers can customize bikes themselves.

Montague describes the creative process at the company: “We have a healthy competitive ‘one-upmanship’ process where the phrase ‘that is a good idea, but this is a great idea’ is often heard.” That applied to working with his father as well. Both Montagues competed and collaborated for 25 years, always striving for “Performance and Portability” [the company’s motto], until the elder Montague died in February 2011. “He and I developed some great products by being a little competitive with each other,” Montague recalls. “At the end of the day, the inventor was a Montague either way, so which idea was whose didn’t really matter.”

Learn more about Montague Foldable Bikes at: www.montaguebikes.com.

Photos and video courtesy of Ryan Walas.

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Montague Paratrooper Pro mountain bike folds to 36”x28”x12”, and weighs approximately 29 lbs.



Paratrooper Pro mountain bike goes from a full-size bike to completely folded in about 20 seconds, with no need for tools. Take the front wheel off and loosen the release lever located on top of the frame.



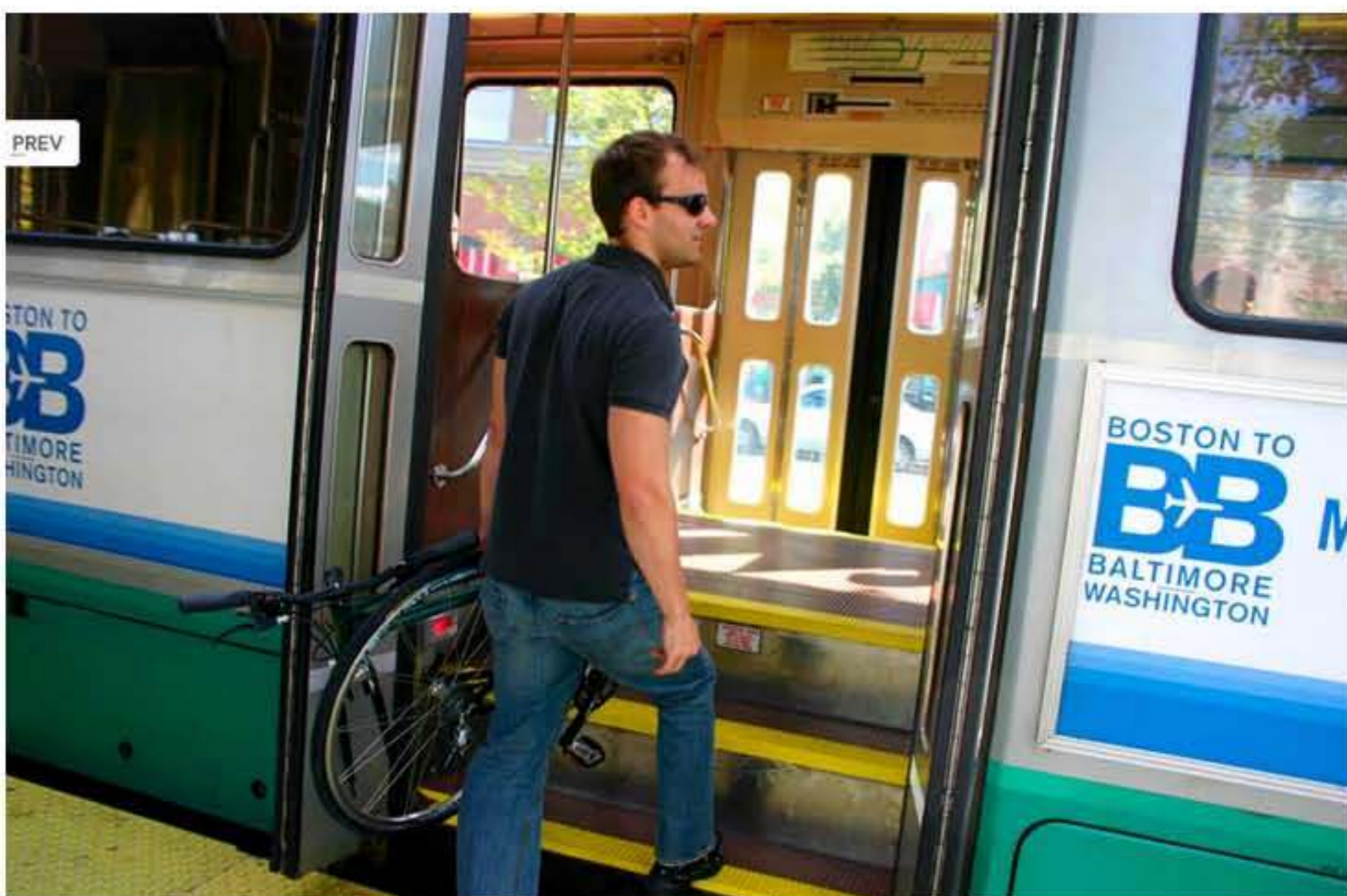
Soldier ready to board plane with the Montague Paratrooper Tactical Mountain Bike, designed as ground mobility for airborne units.



Paratrooper mid-air with a Paratrooper Folding Tactical Mountain Bike.



Soldiers can get around on a bike rather than on foot. Paratrooper bikes for the military were made with airless tires to avoid flats and no chrome that could reflect.

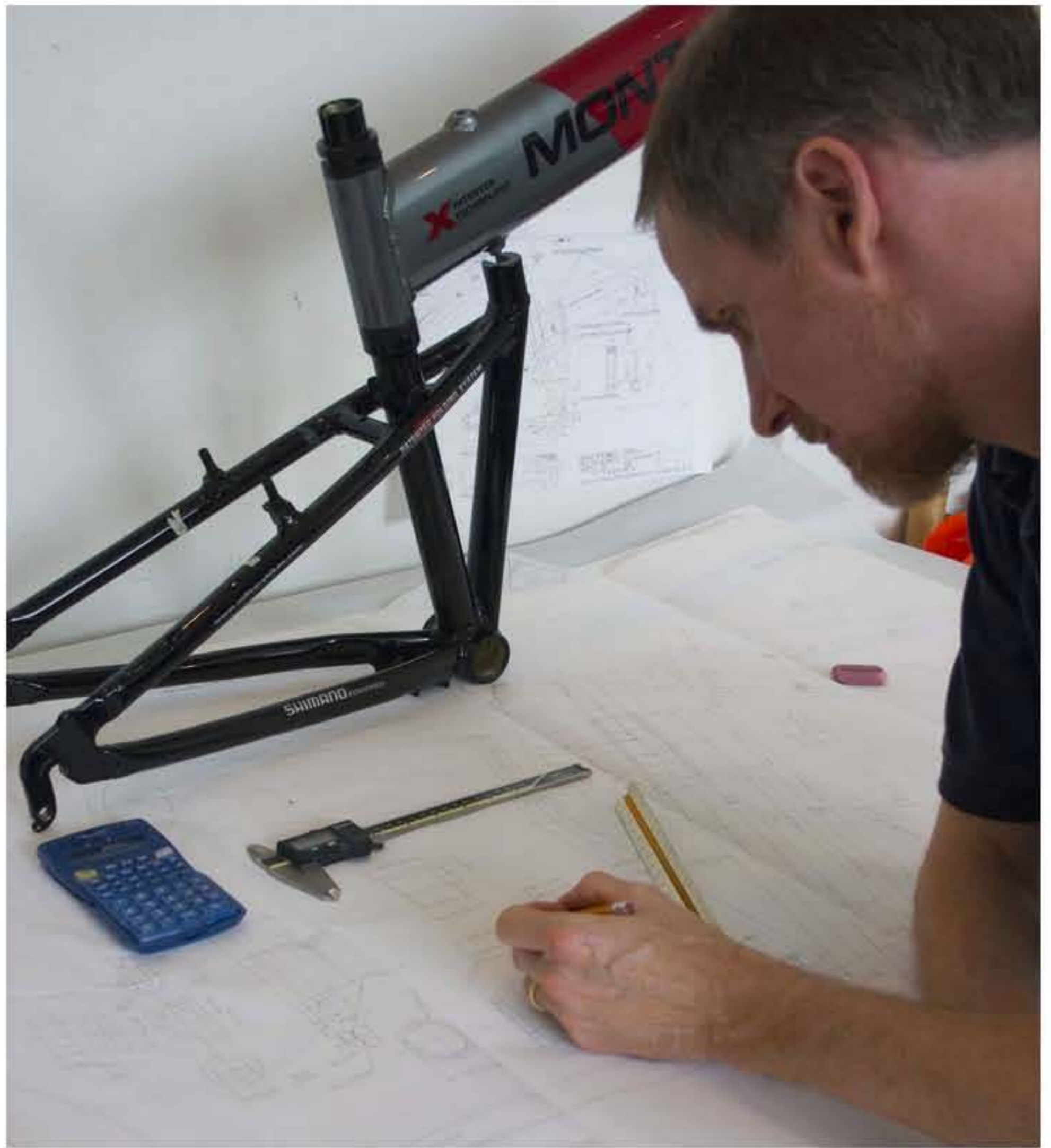


For "civilian" use, a Montague folding bike can be carried onto a train for commuting. Having your bike handy allows for impulsive adventures and enjoyable exercise – with the added benefit of saving money on fuel and reducing emissions. Montague's driving ambition: "Helping people cut their carbon footprint, one ride at a time."

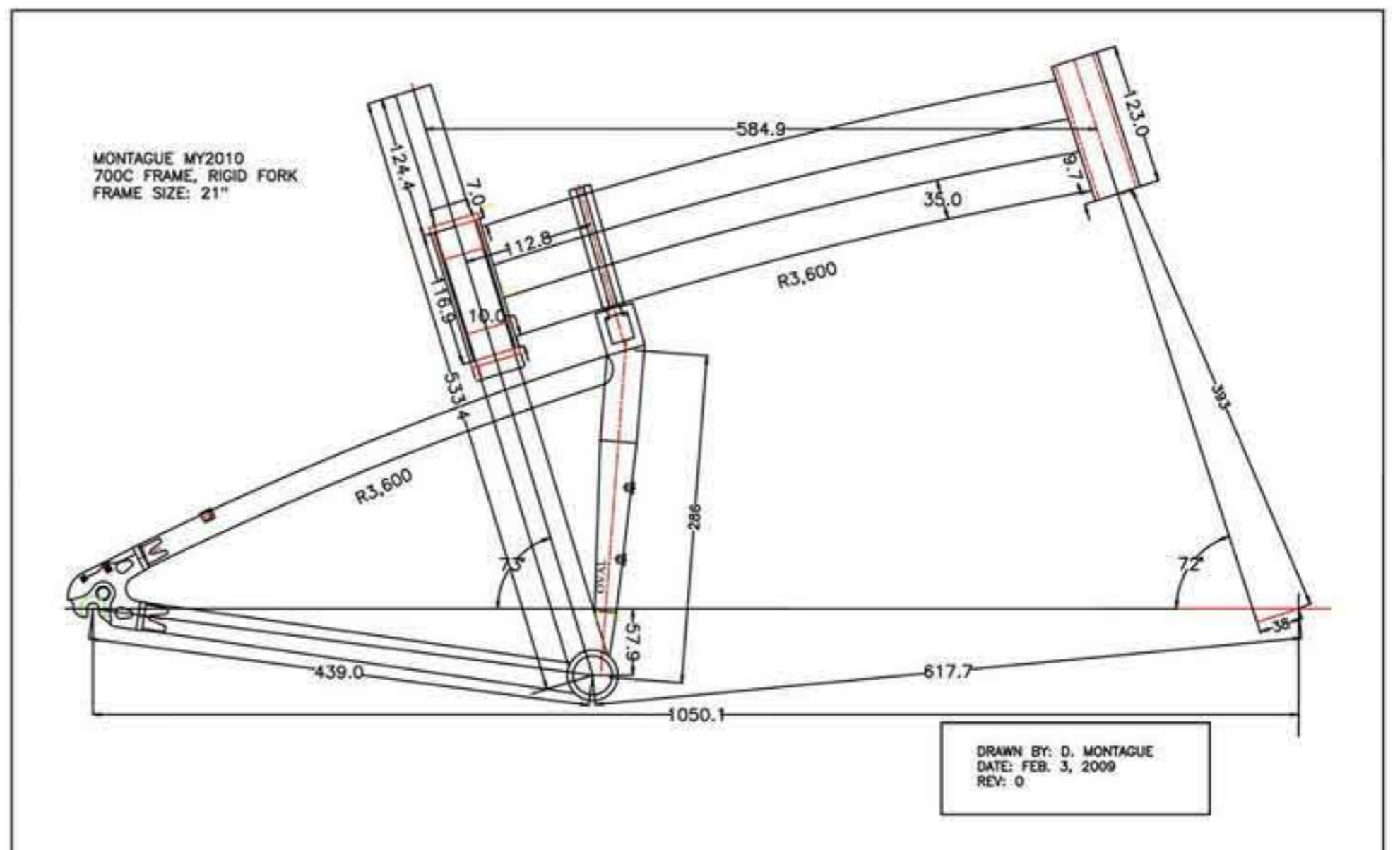


Montague folding bikes heading out to sea.

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Dave Montague refining designs for foldable bikes and frames.



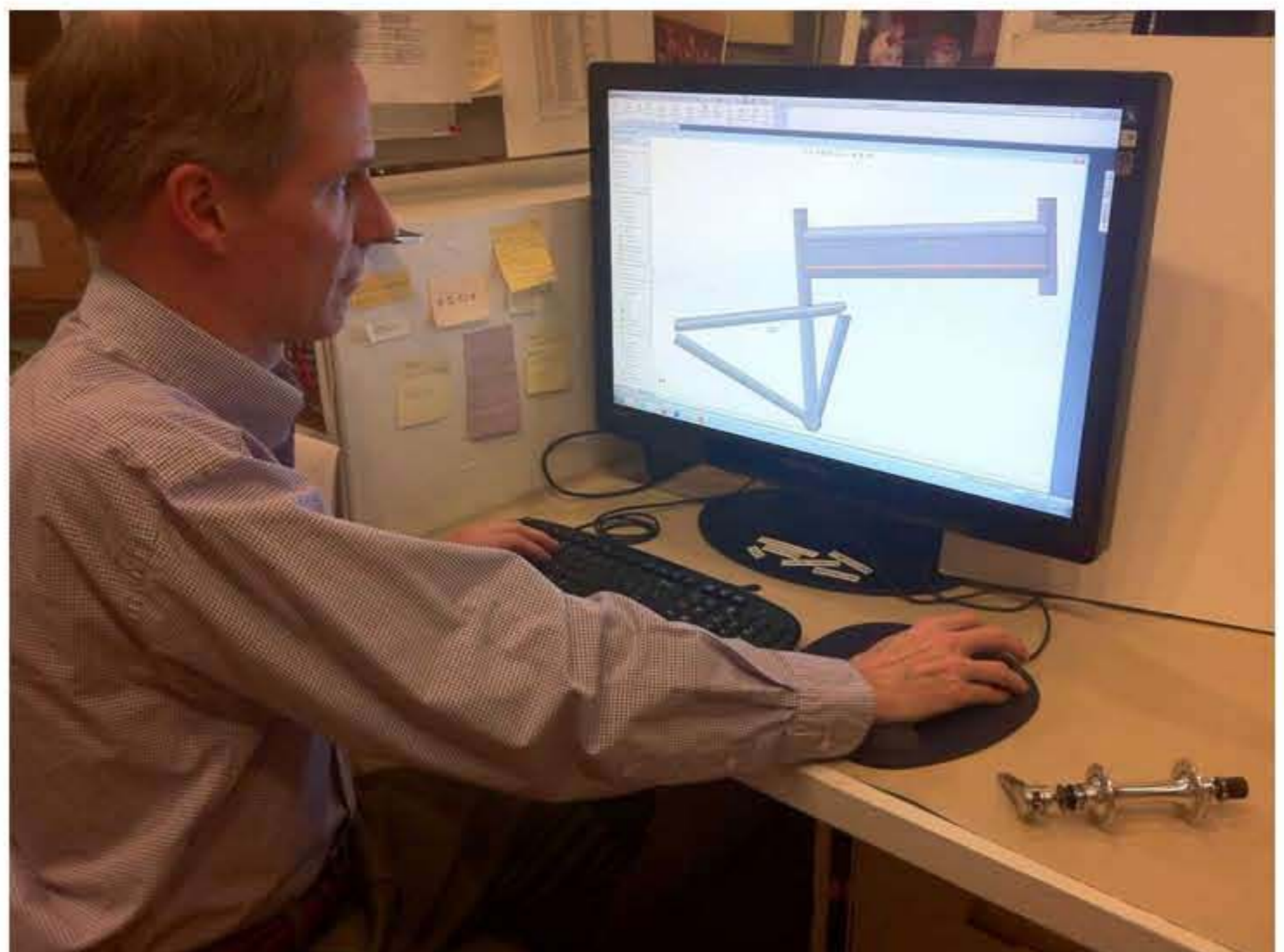
Sketch for the frame geometry of the 21" FIT road bike.



In 2010, Montague debuted a full-size foldable bike designed for pavement riding, with frames of 19" or 21" for shorter or taller riders, 700c wheel size, and 30 speeds.



The new Montague pavement bike is the same folded size as the mountain bike – 36"x28"x12" – but lighter, weighing about 26 lbs. City commuting made easier.



Dave Montague working on updates to the current frame design. The silver item on his desk is the hub of a bicycle wheel that uses the quick-release system that Dave designed called CLIX.



This year, Montague began selling just the frames for both pavement use and mountain use (as pictured here), so riders can customize their bikes.



Founders and designers: Dave Montague and father Harry Montague in 1987, the year the company was formed.