Foldable bike helmets may be a new trend

By John Metcalfe, Atlantic Cities

Normally, seeing a bike helmet squished down like a crumpled melon would invoke feelings of dread: It's a clear signal that somebody had a bad accident.

But with the Closca "Turtle" helmet, it just indicates an unusual design job. The helmet's three sections compact to less than one half of its full size, allowing it to slip into messenger bags already bulging with iPads, fancy-ass headphones and other accoutrements of the urban-style centurion.

The "Turtle" is being marketed on Kickstarter right now by Closca, an up-and-coming maker of helmets based in Valencia, Spain. (It's one prototype in a small field of folding helmets, like the Transformers-looking object from Overade and BioLogic's fencing mask.) The Closca guys conceived of the accordioning brain-guard a few years back during an argument about helmet usage: Why do some people still not wear them, they wondered, when they so clearly help save lives?

They decided the answer was twofold: It can be a chore to carry them around when not cycling, and they detract from the cool, hair-blowing-in-the-wind look that free-scalpers enjoy.

So they built this hardhat to address both issues. A rider can collapse the helmet in a second or less into an easy-to-store, book-like object.

And as for the fashion issue, the Closca team has conjured up "interchangeable textile covers" that they say "have been designed by experts following the latest trendy patterns".

The trendiness becomes obvious, maybe, once you see actual people wearing them.

Closca promises that its telescoping noggin-wrapper, if funded, will swiftly become “part of the urban cyclists’ way of dressing and lifestyle.” Seeing as how they were only $5,227 toward a $45,000 goal on Monday evening, that is a big “if.”