How Social Distancing Created Unique Connection at 2020 Bike 5 Cities Event

Riders report small group rides helped them feel closer to other bicyclists

October 3 marked Bike/Walk Central Florida’s fourth year of putting on the signature Bike 5 Cities ride event through the cities of Orlando, Winter Park, Maitland, Casselberry and the Town of Eatonville. Bike 5 Cities started as a simple idea to create a bike-friendly route through the Orlando metro area to show people of all ages and biking abilities where they can ride comfortably. COVID-19 gave an entirely new meaning to making sure people felt comfortable riding this year.

With COVID-19 precautions in place, spots for the 28-mile slow-pace event sold out in less than three weeks. This was attributed to the Bike 5 Cities planning committee’s steadfast, cautious diligence to establish prudent guidelines for a safe and healthy ride.

To accommodate for social distancing, BWCF limited registration to just over 150 riders. Contrast this with the Bike 5 Cities in 2019 where more than 450 riders participated in the 28-mile ride. The other big change to curb in-person contact: each city served as a ride start location with staggered ride start times scheduled in 15-minute increments. To adhere to CDC guidelines and local health protocols in each city, Bike 5 Cities restricted the group rides to no more than five riders in each small group and were guided by an experienced ride leader.

On top of this, all riders were required to wear a mask at each city start location, at all stops such as traffic signals or stop signs, and when not feasible to maintain a 20-foot distance between the rider in front or behind you.

The question before the Bike 5 Cities planning committee was whether changing the ride from one large group ride to multiple small groups of riders and establishing strict COVID-19 guidelines would discourage or encourage people to participate?

The Bike 5 Cities planning committee hypothesized that people would enjoy the safer alternative of riding in small groups with a personal ride guide more so than the one large group ride of 450 plus. Here is how the committee broke it down:

Large Group Ride and How Bike 5 Cities Accommodated

“Riding in a large group is safer because they are more likely to spot trail hazards, like potholes or tree limbs, and warn others.” Bike 5 Cities assigned experienced ride leaders to escort each small group of riders along the 28-mile route, pointing out hazards and ensuring everyone follows the rules of the road.

“I like riding in a large group because I don’t worry about getting lost or have to use my phone or even look for way-finding signs.”

All experienced ride leaders rode the 28-mile route several times before the event. They carried a cue sheet, downloaded the Bike 5 Cities Ride with GPS online map, and were guided by an experienced ride leader.

ABOUT BIKE 5 CITIES RIDE

Bike 5 Cities started as a simple idea to create a bike-friendly route through the Orlando metro area to show people of all ages and biking abilities where they can ride comfortably. As the ride’s popularity skyrocketed, it has turned out to be an advocacy asset in the movement to push for more bike-friendly infrastructure throughout Metro-Orlando. For more details about the existing bike routes and trails used to make up the route, head to the Bike 5 Cities event page at bikewalkcentralflorida.org.

There, you’ll find a GPS map and Google map of the route if you and your friends would like to take on the 28-miles for yourselves. You can also learn more about the COVID-19 guidelines established specifically for the 2020 group ride.

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One Foolish Act Can Ruin a Thousand Other Great Ones

A life Jeremy Becker will never live...

On April 3, 2015 a drunk driver killed 16-year-old Jeremy Becker while he was riding his bicycle home. He also killed the marriage to his wife Heidi, the woman he would have met in five years; their children Matthew and Jenny; the days on Lake Griffin; and the day his daughter would have been married on the lawn of the home they would have lived in.

A family Miguel Ortega will never have...

On January 10, 2015 a drunk driver killed Miguel Ortega as he waited to cross the street. He also killed the day in 2017 Miguel would meet Maria, the woman he’d marry; their two girls, Angela and Emma; the days laughing as he taught them to fish; and that summer day in August when they surprised him on his 42nd birthday.

If you’re impaired, don’t drive.
www.AlertTodayFlorida.com
Funded by FDOT
Bicycle Infrastructure Assistance Update
by Ed Barsotti, Program Director

Everyone has different preferences when it comes to transportation, but there’s one thing all road users share: everyone is a pedestrian at some point.

Unfortunately, some road users share another, often fatal preference. **Impairment.**

Impairment can mean many things, but most often it means operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including some prescription drugs).

Each year thousands of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists are seriously or fatally injured in completely preventable, alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

Motorists commit a crime whenever their ability to safely operate a vehicle is impaired by the effects of alcohol or drugs. But what about impaired pedestrians and bicyclists? Depending on the level of impairment, a pedestrian or bicyclist may not maintain the perceptual, cognitive, or physical skills required to navigate their route safely.

And let’s not forget that alcohol and drug impairment often lead to poor decisions.

Impaired pedestrians are more likely to cross against the signal, dart into traffic, or trip and fall from the curb. Impaired bicyclists are more likely to ride against traffic, weave into oncoming traffic, or forget to use bike lights after dark.

In 2015, Florida confirmed 1,049 fatalities in alcohol- and drug-related crashes. Impaired pedestrians accounted for more than 22%, and impaired bicyclists accounted for more than 4% of those fatalities.

Every crash, every injury, every fatality not only affects those involved, it also affects their families, friends, and community.

How do we resolve this epidemic? **TAKE A STAND.** Be personally responsible. Don’t drive, walk, or cycle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Remind your friends and loved ones to do the same. **HAVE A PLAN** to get home safely before taking part in activities where alcohol or drugs may be a factor.

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**Is an eBike in Your Future?**

by Jim Dodson

I realize you are likely an experienced road cyclist who enjoys the challenges and benefits of endurance training. So do I. That being said, I am comfortable in predicting an eBike will likely be in your future. There are a variety of reasons which will push each of us in that direction.

You may have heard sales of eBikes are exploding worldwide. It is an extension of the dramatic over 300% increase in bicycle use in the age 60-79 demographic which began over a decade ago. The COVID crisis caused eBike sales in U.S. to explode by 70%. It is predicted over 120 million eBikes will be sold in the next three years. Already in the Netherlands, eBike sales surpassed traditional bikes in 2018.

I was amazed to read in several places that 28% of eBike sales are now to people intending to use it in lieu of an automobile. Part of this is being driven by a desire to reduce carbon emissions. Many people have a more practical reason. They want to reduce their transportation costs and actually enjoy the time they spend running errands or commuting to work.

You might wonder who is leading this transformation. Rad Power Bikes is a variety of models from touring, commuting and utility bikes. I would suspect there are not a huge number of first time traditional bicycle buyers in their 70’s, let alone their mid 80’s.

So why are eBikes so popular? First, they are fun. They put a smile on your face. They make perfect sense when you see statistics showing 35% of our trips in the car are less than two miles. One survey revealed eBike users replaced 46% of their car commutes and 30% of their driving errands.

Driving eBike popularity is the downward trend in prices for relatively good quality equipment. This is the result of increased competition, the development of lighter, longer lasting batteries and better motors. While they are perceived as being much easier to ride, the cardio benefit is still significant. You may work less but do it more often and over a longer distance. They are immensely practical and can be ridden virtually anywhere when properly (continued on page 5)

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**BLUE LIGHT CORNER**

Time for a Polite Reminder

by Cpl. Mike Nelson, Collier County Sheriff’s Office

I

We are rapidly approaching that time of the year that makes Florida famous, that time of balmy breezes and beautiful cool weather, which also means it is time to enjoy our wonderful outdoor activities like riding our bicycles and taking a stroll through our neighborhood. Our seasonal and tourist populations are coming, too. In this time of COVID travel restrictions, lock downs, and social distancing, more and more people are returning to bicycling and other outdoor activities for relaxation, physical fitness, entertainment and to just enjoy the fresh air and nature’s beauty.

With all the changes that go with our new-found lifestyle arrangements, like working from home, virtual offices and meetings; people that haven’t been on a bike in a while, maybe since childhood, it seems prudent to provide a reminder to the statutory rules that govern our roadway and sidewalk usage.

Helmet Law - Fla. Stat. §316.2065 (d) - A bicycle rider or passenger who is under 16 years of age must wear a bicycle helmet that is properly fitted and is fastened securely upon the passenger’s head by a strap and that meets the federal safety standard for bicycle helmets, final rule, 16 C.F.R. part 1203. As used in this subsection, the term “passenger” includes a child who is riding in a trailer or semitrailer attached to a bicycle.

Treatment as a Vehicle - Fla. Stat. §316.003 (75); 316.2065 - In Florida, bicycles are vehicles according to the statute that defines vehicles and a person riding a bicycle has all the rights and duties of the driver of a vehicle as provided in Chapter 316 of the Florida Statutes, except as to those provisions which by their nature can have no application.

Sidewalk Riding - Fla. Stat. §§316.2065(9)-(10) - Florida allows bicycles to operate on sidewalks subject to the following rules:

- A person propelling a bicycle by human power upon and along a sidewalk, or across a roadway upon and along a crosswalk, shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing such pedestrian.

Bicycling Under the Influence - Fla. Stat. §§316.193; 316.003 - In Florida, bicycles are defined as vehicles. Florida’s law prohibiting driving while under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances is written so that it applies to all vehicles and therefore applies to bicyclists. Bicycles should not be operated while intoxicated and operating a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances may result in severe punishments.

Safe Passing Laws - Fla. Stat. §316.083 - Florida requires the driver of a vehicle overtaking a bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle must pass the bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle at a safe distance of not less than 3 feet between the vehicle and the bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle.

Door Law - Fla. Stat. §316.205 - Florida requires that no person shall open any door on a motor vehicle unless and until it is reasonably safe to do so and can be done without interfering with the movement of other traffic. In addition, no person shall leave a door open on the side of a vehicle available to moving traffic for a period of time longer than necessary to load or unload passengers.

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**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE...**

Love to Ride

by Courtney Ashley Ryan Reynolds, FBA President

One of my earliest memories is riding my bike as a five-year-old in Daytona Beach. The memory is actually of my mother’s voice screaming my name – ASHLEY!!! – because she did not find me in the front yard of our house, where I was supposed to be. I had sped down the block on my purple bike, seeking out my best friends who lived around the corner. I was in pursuit of fun and freedom, with few concerns until I heard the high-pitched panic in my mom’s voice.

The stories that people posted during the challenge reminded me of my early biking adventures and so many other good memories. Yulisbeth shared that biking helped her get out of bed after fighting cancer. Laura and her fiancé biked to the courthouse for a marriage license and eloped. My good friend Poorna shared a picture of three generations of women in her family on bikes – her mother, herself and her daughter.

These stories and pictures show that biking truly is magical. A bicycle is not just a vehicle, but an avenue for adventure, inspiration and connection. By the time you read this article, the challenge will have been concluded. But the photos of happy faces and inspiring stories are still available at LovetoRide.net. I urge you to take the time to check it out and see if you don’t find yourself with a wide grin across your face as you read how much riding a bike has improved so many people’s lives.

Keep riding – and stay safe out there!
Executive Director’s Corner...
Program Pivot
by Becky Afonso, Director

In a fan of Bravo TV’s “Top Chef” and have been since season one. It’s not that I’m learning new dishes to create as I am the sheen genius of on-spot creativity. It’s amazing how simple ingredients can become culinary masterpieces without ever tasting them (I trust the judges). The reason for mentioning “Top Chef” is that this past season, which aired starting on March 19, 2020, may have been one of the last reality TV shows to be taped prior to the pandemic outbreak. This non-pandemic ‘normal’ gave the show a sense of nostalgia for how it used to be for the restaurant industry and dining in general.

One catch word from this particular “Top Chef” season that plays over and over in my mind is pivot. Example: the chefs would have a challenge to create a vegan menu based on purchases at the local farmer’s market. Although they could sketch out a potential menu prior to shopping, they knew there might need to be a pivot if certain ingredients were not available. I haven’t heard the word pivot used so much since grade school basketball practice.

Turns out, pivot has become a pandemic way of life. In fact, I would vote for pivot to be the 2020 Word of the Year. Who hasn’t been one of the last reality TV shows to be taped prior to the pandemic outbreak. This non-pandemic ‘normal’ gave the show a sense of nostalgia for how it used to be for the restaurant industry and dining in general.

Zoom online platform gave FBA the means to launch our first ever Virtual Seminar Series, to which we went right to the hot-button topic of E-Bikes, with three one-hour sessions offering different insights and perspectives. If you missed attending the sessions live, visit our Florida Bicycle Association YouTube channel to view the videos (link to channel is on our website).

The virtual pivot is here to stay, although I wouldn’t consider virtual to be the end-all direction for FBA. We may not know when we can get back to safely meeting in person, but we do understand the value of human contact. That said, it’s nice to have in our back pocket the ability to host Virtual Seminar Series on just about any topic at any time (look for more to come for March 2021 – Florida Bicycle Month. Please, send us your ideas to becky@floridacycle.org).

2020 may not be everyone’s favorite year, but for me personally and FBA, we have embraced the challenges with a pivot here and a pivot there, avoiding those paralyzing brick walls of change in order to move forward. I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. And remember, if a traditional celebration isn’t possible, just pivot to what works and make it happen.

Welcome Caitlin

FBA is happy to welcome to our Board of Directors Caitlin Cerame. Caitlin has worked for the past five years at the Emerald Coast Regional Council in Pensacola on land use and transportation planning. She currently manages the bicycle and pedestrian programs for three Transportation Planning Organizations in Northwest Florida. As a planner, she is interested in the intersection of land use and transportation to promote healthy and accessible multi-modal outcomes for communities. Caitlin has experience in bicycle safety and outreach with her previous position as Safe Routes to School Educational Coordinator and has completed the Traffic Safety 101 course and LCI seminar. In her free time, Caitlin enjoys hiking, biking and attempting to maintain a veggie garden. Caitlin has a B.A. in Political Science and M.A. in Urban and Regional Planning with a concentration in GIS.

A Good Time to Invest in Bikes

Reprinted with permission from BikeWalkLee, originally posted on 10/22/2020, by Ken Gooderham

Government revenue is down. There’s no clear end to the pandemic. Uncertainty reigns, with confusion close by its side.

So why is it a good time to invest in bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) infrastructure? Let me tell you why. Demand is high, and the need should continue to grow.

The pandemic pushed people outside as a safe place to meet and move. That pushed bike sales to record highs, as well as getting people out walking and running in growing numbers. And now, even as governments strive to open the economy by relaxing Covid clampdowns, a lot of people are keeping up their open-air exercise routines... both out of habit, enjoyment and health concerns.

More users need more paths and lanes on which to safely ride, run and walk. That can be accommodated today and encourage them tomorrow to turn something healthy into a habit even when the pandemic panic subsides for real. It’s a good economic jolt, growing jobs by building something that adds value to communities.

There are a lot of people out of work, a lot of companies struggling. An influx of infrastructure spending could counter that at a time when the economy needs a lot of encouragement... and too many parts of our local, state and national infrastructure is aging and in need to repair or replacement.

So, let’s make some of that infrastructure bike/ped focused. Why? Because people will use it, which creates value in the neighborhoods it serves, which boost home values, which increases property taxes, which helps to fund local government and build local businesses. There aren’t a lot of investments that can claim that.

People are rethinking how they live, increasing the focus on fitness and family. Bike/ped suits this new normal.

The pandemic has shown some people which community amenities are necessities vs. extravagances. At a time when people are spending more time together (families) and apart (friends), amenities that won’t close but will allow distancing (and which can get you from Point A to Point B to boot) and which are nearby and accessible become more attractive – and more essential.

eBike (continued from page 4)

configured. They smooth out the hills, allow older riders to keep up with friends and extend their range.

They will dramatically enhance the transformation of our urban cores from being auto centric to bicycle centric. Market Street in San Francisco is a leading example of what the future holds.

Given these dynamics, it is only a question of when, not if, most of us will at least add an eBike to our stable. We have a video on our website which features additional information on this topic.

Jim Dodson is an experienced bicycle accident lawyer, cyclist, former FBA Board Secretary and bicycle safety advocate who has been representing accident victims for over 25 years. Although his primary office is in Clearwater, he represents injury victims throughout Florida. He is the author of the Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook which answers the most commonly asked questions by injured cyclists. If you have questions about a Florida cycling accident this valuable resource is available for free at jimdodsonlaw.com.

*Legal information is not legal advice. Nothing in this article may be considered legal advice. If you have specific questions for Jim Dodson, simply call his office at 1-888-340-0840. There is never a charge to talk about your case.*
Cycling Towards Sustainability
by Angela Ryan

Can cycling result in measurable sustainability improvements? As a long-time trained and educated environmental scientist and urban planner, I can definitively state that increasing cycling infrastructure and improving cultural behavior towards cyclists can indeed result in significant strides for sustainability efforts. Together, while cycling apart, we can change our communities and possibly even the future – for the better.

Most of us are familiar with the three dimensions of sustainability which include: environment, economy and society. Creating a sustainable future means all three of these elements are equally successful; however, the current balancing act to ensure development is sustainable is slanted and highly unstable. Cycling provides an opportunity to satisfy each of the three sustainability dimensions and provide a more equitable future for the people in Florida.

With Florida's total population over 21 million and comprised of large cities like Miami, Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida is like other urbanized areas in that sustainability challenges include high energy consumption, high resource consumption challenges, high demand for water resources, creation of landfills and pollution control. In consideration for the consistent population growth in Florida, it is reasonable these sustainability challenges will continue to expand.

One of the most significant sustainability challenges, outside of sea level rise, is arguably transportation challenges resulting from rapid suburban sprawl and communities lacking infrastructure for mass transit and active transportation.

Transportation challenges in Florida may appear minimal in comparison to sea level rise. Conversely, an argument can be made that the lack of suitable transportation opportunities is the driving force behind many of the sustainability challenges throughout the State. Specifically, the inability for low-income populations to access jobs, medical care, education and healthy food due to a lack of affordable transportation options threatens people’s ability to overcome poverty. Florida’s auto-centric dynamic requires individuals commute to work in automobiles and take non-work-related trips by autos. This cultural phenomenon directly contributes to global warming due to transportation being one of the top sources of emissions in the United States.

Additionally, an increase in road construction to accommodate the growing population in Florida results in habitat loss as linear transportation projects are one of the biggest impacts to natural habitats.

How does cycling fit into this complicated situation? Well, active transportation includes cycling, walking and other human-powered transportation options. The benefits from increasing active transportation networks result in more opportunities for a wide range of people to access jobs, school and other needed resources. Making our roadways safer for cyclists and providing opportunities to obtain bikes can cumulatively result in massive social, economic and environmental improvements.

As one specific example of benefits from cycling, let's conduct a simple analysis of air quality improvements from cycling, let's conduct a simple analysis of air quality improvements from cycling.

According to the Greenhouse Gas Equivalency Calculator, these cyclists saved 10,368 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the environment.

Now for the fun part. Let's make the assumption that each cyclist traveled 6-miles and that these trips could have been taken by a fuel-efficient 4-door 2017 Mazda with a 27 mile-per-gallon city driving ability. Utilizing this vehicle as our measurement and travelling within the city, these 31,500,000 miles would have required 1,166,666.7 gallons of gas. Converting these gallons of gas to emissions using the Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Equivalency Calculator, these cyclists saved 10,368 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the environment.

Utilizing the above mathematical analysis and perspective, in 2020 there were over 5 million unsung cyclist heroes who worked together to prevent a tremendous amount of pollution from entering the environment. The decision by each of these cyclists to take their bikes resulted in cleaner air and improved environmental conditions. As greenhouse gases have been linked to issues ranging from asthma to global warming, these cumulative actions by strangers may have helped us all live a little healthier.

A fundamental change to the management of the environment, the economy and society is required to ensure a sustainable future. Here in Florida, we can start by ensuring cycling is an accessible and acceptable transportation option for everyone. So, get up, get going and save the world, Florida cyclists.

Bike 5 Cities Event

and assisted in placing the route markers at key locations.

“i like riding in larger groups because of the adrenaline rush. I'm more motivated when I ride with others.”

The guided, small group rides allowed for people to get to know each other. The pace was set at a speed where people could talk, laugh and truly get to know each other.

Emily Hanna, the Executive Director of Bike/Walk Central Florida, said it best, “We know that Bike 5 Cities is something riders look forward to every year. But this year, it really felt like there was even more emphasis on the social aspect of an event like this. In fact, riders told us that in some ways the small groups actually enhanced their experience, because they got to make personal connections with the people they were riding with. And having a guide felt like getting their own personal tour.”

The unique circumstances surrounding this year’s ride was something riders told us made this event even more necessary and memorable as they made their way through the cities of Orlando, Winter Park, Maitland, Casselberry and the Town of Eatonville. At a time when people everywhere are keeping their distance, they said this gave them a way to safely get together and participate in something that not only they enjoy, but were able to share that experience, too.

“We talked to a man who had a heart attack and began training as soon as he recovered, specifically so that he could ride this year,” said Hanna. “We met a couple celebrating their fourth year of doing this ride. A mother and daughter who traveled from Gainesville so they could do this together. And a family who even had their toddlers in tow. People came from all over the state for the chance to get out and ride like this.”

Emily also wanted to give a big shout out to the event sponsors who had faith that BWCF would pull off a safe event. “We wouldn't be able to do this event without the help of Presenting Sponsor Alert Today Florida, the Florida Department of Transportation’s bicycle and pedestrian advocacy initiative. We also give special thanks to supporting sponsors FireFly Photo Booth, Caam Events, David’s World Cycle, Fishback Dominick, Florida Freewheelers, HDR, Inwood Consulting, Kittleson & Associates, fuel up sponsors Bobé’s and Harvill’s Produce Company and starter sponsors CN Prestige Fehr & Peers.”
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Mary Beth Garcia, Ride Leader/Ride Marshal Program Director – laura@floridabicycle.org, 407-399-9961, Sophoppchy
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Laura Minns, Transit/Rail Lead Planner, laurat@e7@gmail.com
Dan Moser, Bike/Ped/Traffic Safety Consultant, bikepedmoser@gmail.com
Yvonne Nyakana, Black Girls Do Bike/ Miami, gobavm@gmail.com
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FBA Annual Awards

Nominate those worthy individuals and organizations to acknowledge their significant service and contributions to bicycling in Florida during 2020.

Categories include but are not limited to:
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Enforcement Officer or Agency, Educator or Regional Trainer, Trail Manager or Promoter,
Bicycle Friendly Community or Business,
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Bicycle Business or Store Advocate, Bicycle Professional, Citizen Bike Advocate,
Developer, Elected Official Champion,
Volunteer, Special Recognition

Please visit floridabicycle.org, to submit your nomination online or mail your nomination to FBA, PO Box 2452, Oldsmar, FL 34677
(please include your contact information with mailed nominations).
Recipients announced March 1, 2021 to kick off Florida Bicycle Month!

Working Together to Build a Bicycle-friendly Florida

OUR MISSION: is to encourage more people to bicycle through education and advocacy.

OUR VISION: is for bicycling to be safe, accepted and encouraged in Florida.

OUR PURPOSE:
• Protect and advance the interest of bicyclists
• Educate the public about sharing roadways and paths with people on bicycles
• Encourage the creation of great places to ride
• Continue to grow as a financially stable, well-managed organization

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The Florida Bicycle Association was founded by people like you who want to make Florida a better place to ride a bicycle. Our projects and programs that benefit bicyclists are made possible primarily through membership and sponsorship to our organization. Simply put, without membership, sponsorship and donations, the Florida Bicycle Association would not exist. Keep bicycle enjoyment alive in Florida and help us in the fight against bicycle fatalities, Join FBA!

Did you know your membership donation to FBA is tax-deductible?

FBA is a 501(c)(3) education and charitable nonprofit corporation. You can join FBA online or download and mail an application from our website, www.floridabicycle.org. You can request an application to be mailed to you by contacting Becky Afonso at 813-748-1513.

Does your place of employment offer matching gifts to non-profits? Think FBA!

Bicycling is one of life's simple pleasures to enjoy, not fear. Join or donate to the Florida Bicycle Association and let's ride together for Florida bicycling excellence. Contact Becky Afonso at becky@floridabicycle.org for more information on ways to donate to FBA.

The Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) was incorporated in 1997 for educational and charitable purposes. FBA is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations, including membership dues, are tax deductible. A copy of the current financial statements may be obtained by contacting FBA.

To become a member supporter of FBA, join online at www.fbamembership.org

The Messenger is published quarterly as a service to members and advocates for a bicycle-friendly Florida by the:
Florida Bicycle Association, P.O. Box 2452, Oldsmar, FL 34677
www.floridabicycle.org • e-mail: Becky@floridabicycle.org • Phone: 813-748-1513

FBA Membership includes a subscription to the Messenger.
The FBA accepts and welcomes your advertising!
Please see the website for rates and specifications or e-mail: Becky@floridabicycle.org. Publishers reserve the right to review advertising content and to reject advertising that, in the opinion of the Association, is either in the best interest of FBA's members or its goals and objectives. Although we carefully review articles and information submitted, FBA is not responsible for the information or opinions contained herein unless explicitly stated as official policy of FBA.

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Autumn Issue – August 15

A copy of the official registration and financial information (CH9008) may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. http://www.800helpfla.com/
Cycling Across America

By Marty Perlmutter

Ever since I was a teenager living in Little Silver, NJ, back in the 1960s, I had dreams of riding a bicycle across the country, east to west and when I got to Los Angeles, throw out the first pitch at a Dodgers game.

I was not a serious cyclist until after my two daughters had graduated college and started their own families. Then I went from a Huffy to a Rossetti around the turn of the century and challenged myself with one-day rides from Miami to Key West or Cape Kennedy to Crystal River. I loved the solitude, hated the headwinds.

Then in 2012, my close friend Roy Gross died of multiple myeloma, an incurable blood cancer, and I thought it was time to take action on a cross country tour. Why all of a sudden? Because Roy and I discussed how one day when we were retired, we would go Portland (Oregon) to Portland (Maine) on bikes. Roy was retired (I was not) and living in Idaho when he became sick and passed away in March of 2012 but before he died, I wrote him a love letter; an email which stated how much I enjoyed just being with him. We golfed together, skied together, traveled with our wives together. We spent hours trying to figure out the next gag to play on the other.

But in all seriousness, I told him I would, in his honor (and that was difficult to write; how do you tell your best friend a bike ride would be in his memory?) cycle across the country.

I was just starting a new business in Miami and didn’t have time or the finances to go coast to coast but my wife Bobbie suggested a ride up the eastern seaboard and so we did. “We” being Bobbie in our support van and a friend Diane Sawyer. It was 1,348 miles in 17 days, Jacksonville to Manhattan Beach, CA, to Jennings Beach, CT. It was a 50-day, 3,411 mile fully-supported tour with the group staying in hotels along the way.

We started with 18 riders but 11 of those were only going to Flagstaff. The other seven were in it for the long haul. But at mile 10.2, one of the guys – Kiel Weston – reached for his backpack for some energy food and the pack slipped out of his hand and into his front wheel. Over the top he went after the sudden stop and he broke his wrist in a couple places.

The remaining six were together the rest of the way and this past September, I documented the tour in my book Cycling Across America, A Journey of Hope and Awareness.

What an experience. We rode in 120 degrees in the Mojave Desert and 34 degrees in upstate New York. We rode in negative elevation in California to more than 7,000 feet in New Mexico; along the shoulders of interstate highways and on the old Route 66.

We met people who asked why we were all wearing the same kits, and what were we doing riding bicycles in the middle of (fall in the state). When told it was a fundraiser, they reached into their purses or wallets and handed us a donation.

But the true meaning of the ride came into focus in Ohio where Tim Nash, a multiple myeloma patient, came to our hotel just to meet one of the guys. Chuck Wakefield, a multiple myeloma patient himself for a decade or more, was 71 years old and was riding across the country.

When Tim grabbed Chuck and pulled him into a huge hug to thank him for what he was doing, it became clear that the ride across America was not about me pedaling 3,400 miles or fulfilling a lifelong dream. It was about what we, as a team, were doing.

That’s when I realized why several people had driven hours out of their way to see us, to talk to us, to be a small part of what we were doing. We realized, together as a group, it wasn’t about cycling so much as it was the inspiration cancer patients were getting from our journey.

Our tour raised more than $400,000 for the MMRF and remains today one of the largest individual fundraisers that organization has ever put together. It remains, also, the best way I could honor my friend Roy.
Discover a different side of Florida on our many pristine trails as they wind through friendly, vibrant communities along the magnificent St. Johns River and through our abundant and beautiful parks. One thing’s for sure, when you bicycle here, you’ll experience miles of smiles.

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED BETWEEN DAYTONA BEACH AND ORLANDO. Download a Visitors Guide at VisitWestVolusia.com

Whether you’re cycling along side the horses and carriages near Nazareth, PA...

...or strolling along the ancient roadways in Jerusalem, Israel...

...it’s a small world when it comes to the common courtesy of SHARE THE ROAD.

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EXPLORE OUR SHOPPING, DINING, ARTS AND HISTORY.
Or, just relax and spin your wheels.

Congratulations 2019 Award Recipients!
Bicycle Club of the Year – Caloosa Riders

(continued on page 13)
BICYCLE DAYTONA
A great way to get from A to B!

Mapping Daytona Beach for Bicycles
by Jason Aufdenberg

I've been experiencing Daytona Beach from a bicycle transportation perspective for over 14 years. I got my first long-tail cargo bike in 2007, mostly for grocery shopping and commuting to work, and I haven't looked back. I got interested in bicycling advocacy in 2010, when I joined the FBA. In 2012 I was appointed to the Florida Sea to Sea Transportation Planning Organization (FSTPO) Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) as an alternate representing Volusia County at large. I took a Cycling4Women course in Orlando in 2015, which was a big help when I needed to 'bike for rent' and horrible storm at my university afterward. That same year I founded my first League of American Bicyclists' National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. and lobbied Congress to improve conditions for bicycling and walking. At the Bike Summit, I realized about the concept of bicycle networks based on Level of Traffic Stress (LTS), how LTS maps can be used to measure bicycle network accessibility and comfort, and help people plan a stressful routes for cycling from point A to point B. In 2018, the FSTPO funded an LTS analysis of all major arterial and collector roads of Volusia County and parts of Flagler County, and a BPAC sub-committee was formed under the production of a Bicycle Network Map which was published in 2019. The map includes four levels of caution from extremely low to high and grades road segments on the basis of speed, traffic volumes, bike lane/shoulder width, obstructions and crash frequency.

This county-wide map of the Volusia County Bicycle Network, produced by the Volusia County Bicycle Task Force and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, includes four stress levels, ranging from A (low stress) to E (high stress). One level of stress contains areas where cyclists face the greatest challenges, while another level indicates areas with the most comfortable cycling conditions. The map also includes bike lanes, shoulders, and other features that contribute to a safe and enjoyable riding experience. It is a valuable resource for cyclists, planners, and policy makers as it highlights the need for continued investment in bicycle infrastructure to improve the overall quality of the network.

Florida Bicycle Association

Chapter: Daytona Beach

Volusia County

Regional Multi-Use Trails Network
by Jason Aufdenberg

There are several steps we can take to improve the bicycle network in Daytona Beach. Firstly, we need to prioritize the construction of new bike lanes and protected intersections, especially along major arterial roads. Secondly, we should continue to advocate for funding for bike-friendly projects at the state and federal level. Thirdly, we need to increase public awareness of the benefits of cycling, and promote cycling as a healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transportation. Finally, we need to work with local businesses and organizations to provide cycling infrastructure, such as bike parking and repair stations, to make it easier for cyclists to use the network.

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**Where My Ride Takes Me**

*As part of the Love to Ride Florida challenge, FBA Executive Director Becky Afonso set a goal of 400 miles for November and found a 10% grade in an otherwise flat Pinellas County.*

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**2019 Florida Bicycling Street Smarts CyclingSavvy Edition Now Available**

The Florida customized version of the 2019 Bicycling Street Smarts CyclingSavvy Edition is now available. The traffic laws section reflects 2019 Florida Statutes including the addition of Micromobility Devices and Motorized Scooters. Every cyclist deserves to discover the joy of riding confidently, legally and safely. All new in 2019, John Allen’s classic work has been thoroughly updated to incorporate best practices for easy bicycling, wherever you ride. This edition is replete with strategies for handling today’s multiple roadway and bikeway configurations and packed with illustrations by CyclingSavvy co-founder and FBA Advisory Board member Keri Caffrey.

Whether you bike for transportation, fitness, or recreation, Florida Bicycling Street Smarts CyclingSavvy Edition is a “must have” for your library. You deserve the best booklet on bicycling ever created!

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**FBA Ride Leader/Ride Marshal (RLRM) Update** by Mary Beth Garcia, Program Director

To continue our RLRM program during the pandemic, FBA hosted virtual Zoom sessions over four consecutive Saturdays in mid-September through the beginning of October that ranged from 90 minutes to 2.5 hours in length. The pivot to offer virtual certification, as opposed to our one-day in-person session, was designed to adapt some content topics and, of course, address the impact of COVID-19 on cycling and the role of the Ride Leader/Ride Marshal during the pandemic. We had 24 participants join us virtually, and all 24 passed their certification exam and became part of the FBA’s elite group of Certified Ride Leader/Ride Marshals.

The virtual RLRM workshop sessions allowed us to reach snowbirds that had not returned to Florida yet and cyclists from across the state, including Jacksonville, Tallahassee and Miami. The fourth RLRM session was an elective option to allow a study group, so to speak, before taking the online exam. We had 65% of our participants take the exam after the third and final mandatory session (and pass the exam), yet 50% of them still attended the fourth optional study session. The feedback showed they enjoyed getting together and the opportunity to connect with other cyclists across the state who lead group rides with a focus on the laws and safety. Most of the participants have been practicing social distancing and avoiding group rides during the pandemic, and our virtual sessions provided the opportunity to interact and engage with other cyclists.

The program was presented on the Zoom platform and we engaged participants using the Breakout Room feature, open-mic discussions, polls, and chat box for Q & A.

We appreciate the continued interest in this vital and enriching program. Please stay tuned for more information about our RLRM program and future dates of virtual sessions or in-person classes as safety protocols allow.

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AAA Bicycle Service is available in Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin and portions of Illinois and Indiana.

Serving AAA Members, even on two wheels.

Take the worry out of your journey – even when you’re on a bike. AAA now offers roadside assistance for bicycles.

AAA Bicycle Service is a new benefit with every membership, that provides transportation for you and your bicycle if it breaks down on your ride. It’s one more way AAA helps members relax and enjoy the ride!

Not a member? Join today! AAA.com/Bicycle

Bicycle transportation service is counted toward your allotted roadside assistance service calls per member per membership year. AAA will transport you and your bicycle to any point of safety within the limits of your coverage. AAA Bicycle Service is available in Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin and portions of Illinois and Indiana.

Congratulations 2019 Award Recipients!

(continued from page 9)

Off Road Club – SWAMP Mountain
President Shane Richeson

Citizen Advocate
Ashley Hopkins

Citizen Advocate
Ashley Hopkins

Citizen Advocate
Christian Wagley of Bike Pensacola

Program of the Year – Project Hero Team

Elected Official Champion – Senator Simpson

Bicycle Professional – Mary OBrien

Editor’s note: As proud as we were to announce and honor our award recipients, due to COVID-19, award presentations scheduled past mid-March were postponed. Shown on pages 5 and 10 are the award recipients that we did not include in the Summer 2020 issue.
Slow Ride Pensacola

by Christian Wagley, Executive Director, Bike Pensacola

“Let’s do a slow ride,” said my fellow bike advocate Tim Bustos. And so it was six years ago when about 30 of us gathered for a six-mile meander through historic Pensacola neighborhoods. It was a blast!

We held another ride the next month, and by the third month we knew we were onto something special when 150 riders showed up.

After hosting dozens of rides nearly every month since 2014 (at least until the pandemic hit), I can easily say that the Slow Ride is one of best things ever for advancing the cause of safe cycling in our community. Plus, it’s just a heck of a lot of fun.

We choose a new route each month, which is easy because our intact urban street grid brings a huge advantage over suburban areas in giving us dozens of ways to get between places. Historic homes, leafy streets, parks, bay views—these are things we look for in mapping out each route.

These are social rides, as we ride about five and a half miles in a bit over an hour. This gives us the chance to converse along the way and to enjoy the neighborhoods in slow motion. In some neighborhoods, children and adults alike come outside to watch and wave, as 350 or so people on bicycles makes quite a scene.

Our specific choice to ride through the full diversity of Pensacola neighborhoods, of varying status, has been a blessing. Interestingly, we tend to get a friendlier reception in areas of lower socioeconomic status, in part because more people are outside already and encounter us as we ride by. It’s also been a great experience for many riders, who get to see parts of our city that many have never seen and had never considered visiting on their own.

Our riders represent more of the core of the cycling community than the “go-fast” cyclists that many envision, as our riders run the range from kids to seniors to those who want to build the courage to ride but are afraid to do so on their own. No special bicycle or attire is required—just ride whatever bike you have and wear whatever you want. Many of our riders live in suburban neighborhoods that are not pleasant for cycling and so they load-up their bikes and drive into downtown Pensacola to join-in.

We are social creatures, after all, and many feel safer riding in a group. Our hope is that after getting comfortable riding in a group, they are then able to advance to riding on their own. The community side of the Rides—meeting new people, strengthening bonds, seeing new places—is one of our greatest things about them.

That community-building is a big part of the after-party that follows each Slow Ride, with the Ride sponsor/host putting their own stamp on the event. There can be live music, food trucks, games and always educational exhibits from Bike Pensacola on how we can create a more bicycle-friendly community. When we ride from a retail store or restaurant we enjoy post-event discounts on merchandise and food, encouraging riders to stay around for more fun and to reward those businesses that support the cycling community.

Our Ride Squad is a group of volunteers in yellow vests who manage each ride, ensuring that no one is left behind, riders are kept safe, and any emergencies or breakdowns are handled. A safety briefing to the crowd precedes each event, and we hire Pensacola Police Department officers on motorcycles who escort us through traffic lights and stop signs so that we never stop moving. They actually compare us to a funeral procession in how we move.

The Slow Ride has helped to advance the cause of safe cycling in our community.

Join FBA Today!
Your membership makes a difference.
Add your voice for the future of all bicyclists in Florida.

Name ________________________________

Gender: □ Male □ Female

Business/Club/Agency ___________________________

City __________________________ State _____________ Zip __________________________

Phone __________________________ Email __________________________

Membership type:
□ Individual ($25) □ Family ($35)
□ Student/Snowbird ($15) □ Supporter ($50)
□ Club/Business/Agency ($100) □ Benefactor ($100)
□ Champion ($250) □ Legacy ($500)
□ Other/additional donation __________________________

Membership includes a FREE subscription to the FBA Messenger!

Please mail check to: Florida Bicycle Association
PO Box 2452, Oldsmar, FL 34677
Or go online to: www.floridabicycle.org

FBA Positive Spin
FORWARD PINELAS HOSTS VIRTUAL “BIKE YOUR CITY” EVENT

FBA Executive Director, Becky Afonso, a neighbor to Safety Harbor in Oldsmar, couldn’t pass up the opportunity. “COVID-19 aside, going virtual for the event allowed us to experience Safety Harbor on our own time and at our own pace. This was not so much an escorted route first thing in the morning with a group of people, as it was an invitation to discover, via a social-media driven scavenger hunt, a way to explore an area by myself on a bicycle. I enjoyed the hours and discovered parts of Safety Harbor I did not know existed, like that pink elephant.”
Plenty of Pedal-Power Options in Polk County

Located between Orlando and Tampa, Central Florida's Polk County offers more than a place to lay your head between theme park destinations. From unspoiled lakes and wetlands to historic landmarks, citrus groves to – yes, we have theme parks – there is a reason many Floridians say that Polk County is Florida's sweetest spot.

If you're looking for outside adventures, Polk County offers ample opportunities. Home to more than 550 fresh water lakes and 25,000 acres of unspoiled recreational parks, there are ample ways to enjoy the great outdoors, including water skiing, air boating, kayaking and world-class fishing.

And lots of options for cycling. So many options, in fact, that the first challenge to a bike ride in Polk County is to figure out just what type of experience you want. From paved trails around beautiful bodies of water to off-road through the wilderness, Polk County has a ride that will match whatever you are looking to do.

If you are looking for a paved trail, here are some options:

- **The Chain of Lakes Trail** is 3.2 miles from Central Park in downtown Winter Haven to U.S. Highway 17/92 in Lake Alfred, all along a former railroad bed. The route provides views of many of the lakes in the northern Chain of Lakes, as well as parks, neighborhoods and businesses. Trail users can park at any of the downtown Winter Haven parking lots.
- **The Fort Fraser Trail**, a multi-use 7.75-mile trail runs parallel to U.S. Highway 98 between State Road 540/Winter Lake Road in Lakeland and State Road 60 in Bartow, with trailheads at Polk State College in Lakeland and in Highland City. The fort, built in 1837, was decommissioned less than a year after being opened. The trail travels through tree canopies, pastures and populated areas.
- **Lake-To-Lake Bikeway Route**: This 26-mile urban cycling route is a popular, scenic ride around lakes Parker, Wire, Morton, Mirror, Bonny, Hunter, Hollingsworth and Beulah in Lakeland. Signs clearly mark the bikeway to keep you on the route, which is a mix of parks and urban areas. Parking is easiest along Lake Hollingsworth Drive in Lakeland.
- **The Lake Wales Trailway**, 2.3 miles from Scenic Highway to Buck Moore Road in Lake Wales, is accessed at Kwanis Park, 1000 N. Lake Shore Blvd. Yet another trail created from an abandoned rail bed, the 12-foot-wide path is suitable for just about any fitness activity. The trail is ringed with a variety of flora and fauna, including butterflies, songbirds and raptors, many of which can only be found along the Lake Wales Ridge. The trail also features scenic views of Lake Wales and Bok Tower.
- **The TECO Auburndale Trail** is a 12-foot-wide, 6.6-mile paved multi-use trail starting in Auburndale and leads to Polk City, where it connects with the General James A. Van Fleet State Trail. Make sure to stop at the bald eagle observation area – they have built a nest nearby – at the southern end of the trail. Full facilities are available at the Lake Myrtle Road Trailhead. Take Lake Myrtle Road east of the Polk Parkway and look for the trailhead.
- **The General James A. Van Fleet State Trail** is a 29.2-mile paved multi-use trail that has a trailhead in Polk City. Take State Road 33 for 10 miles north of Polk City, turn left on Green Pond Road and look for the Van Fleet Trail sign. Parking is on the right. This trail cuts through some of Florida's most scenic and rural landscapes as it dissects the heart of the Green Swamp, the source of most of the state's drinking water. The trail stretches from Polk City north to the town of Mabel on State Road 50. Some areas of the path are quite remote – you won't find a general store or even a gas station anywhere near the trail – so plan to take extra water and a snack.
- Mountain bikers looking for rugged trails can try: **Loyce Harpe Park Trail**: This 8-mile bike path offers varied terrain including a technical trail to test the endurance of even the most experienced mountain bike rider. Once a phosphate mine, the main trail winds through the woods, around man-made ponds and up and down hills and dales. If you wander off the main trails, the difficulty increases. But no matter where you are in the park, pay attention – one false move and you’ll join the Swim Team Club into one of the ponds.
- **Take State Road 37 south from Lakeland to Carter Road**, turn right, and the park is on the right. The park is open every day from 8 a.m. to dusk.
- **Circle B Bar Reserve** at 4399 Winter Lake Road is one of the most renowned nature parks in the nation, sure, but it also has trails for cycling. There is a mostly shaded, unpaved trail that is under a canopy of live oaks which follows along the edge of Lake Hancock, opening up in the historic Banana Trail.

The COVID Cruisers Story

By Rozann Abato

On March 17, CF Fitness in Mount Dora was required to close in response to COVID 19. My husband, Carroll Jaskulski, was a regular and this was upsetting. What would he do for exercise? Something had to be done! A plan developed immediately. We could ride bicycles. After all, we had two good ones hanging in the garage with dry rotted tires and seats.

Thank God for Adrenaline Bike Works! They refurbished our bikes and we started riding around town. I posted our rides on Facebook and friends took notice. Friends who own a downtown restaurant asked to ride with us. We said yes. Then a City Councilwoman saw the Facebook posts and wanted to ride. We said yes. A friend of hers asked to ride with us. We said yes.

We rode city streets and Lakeshore Drive to Tavares for about a month – until one rider caught their tire in the railroad tracks in Tavares, fell off the bike and broke both wrists and one elbow. THAT was not part of the plan. Thankfully, Melissa DeMarco, former mayor of Mount Dora is a good friend of ours and rides frequently. She introduced us to the many paved trails in Central Florida. Our days of riding city streets ended immediately. Trails are much safer. The Van Fleet and the Withlacoochee were favorites during the hot summer months.

Friends and neighbors asked if they could ride with us. Many got their bikes refurbished at Adrenaline Bike Works – which helped a small business in the community. We communicate via group Messenger on Facebook. We are a group of people with ages from 51 - 74. We began riding about 10 miles. Now many of us are up to 30-40 miles. There is no competition.

We all ride for our own reasons. The main reason we ride is to turn lemons into lemonade. We absolutely refuse to sit on our sofas and wait for the COVID virus to kill us. We intend to survive this pandemic in good mental and physical condition. We get exercise and sunshine and Vitamin D and lots of laughs – all of which improve the immune system. After each ride, we find a great place to eat lunch and enjoy the camaraderie.

Each Saturday, I post photos, and recently videos, on Facebook of every aspect of our adventure. Friends and family all over the country are following us. Local friends thank us for sharing information about places and things in Central Florida that they never knew existed. We believe our story could be an inspiration to others who need to address this pandemic in a positive way. We have made new friends. We have spent more time with existing friends. Lives have changed for the better.

We have learned so much about the history of places in Central Florida that we never knew about until we rode bicycles. We have spent more time with existing friends. Lives have changed for the better.

We have ridden in the following counties: Lake, Orange, Seminole, Volusia, Polk, Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Putnam, Marion and Sumter.

We have ridden on the following trails: Good Neighbor, Seminole-Wekiva, Spring to Spring, Cross Seminole, Palatka to Lake Butler, West Orange, South Lake, (continued on page 16)
A Rolling Quarantine

by Tom DeMarco – FBA member, regular Messenger contributor and Florida snowbird from Canada

Like most people, I’ve had little inclination to visit exotic destinations this year. Not that I’m afraid of Covid-19, as I have utter confidence in my immune system. My last sick day was in 1986. But for a claustrophobic, perpetual motion machine like me, no international displacement is worth the torture of two weeks of quarantine on both ends.

So instead of the usual bike tour in Europe this fall, I hoped to visit my elderly parents back east. But my brother Dan, neighbour and devoted guardian of Mum and Dad, has stipulated two visitors permitted within 14 days of air travel. I try to explain that the average Covid victim is 80 years old, so therefore, at ages 94 and 99, our parents are securely well beyond the maximum risk demographic. Dan does not accept my math, I don’t even bother suggesting that social isolation is a greater threat to the elderly than is any virus.

Both as an environmentalist and as a physician, I personally consider society’s fixation on CV19 as highly hypocritical. A relatively minor menace to quality life-years, Coronavirus appears elegantly Darwinian with its victim selection compared to so many other forms of preventable death that we continue to neglect. However, I’ve come to accept my status as a Covid Rebel and no longer engage in debate on the matter. I’d rather ride my bicycle, and there’s never been a safer time to do so. Thanks to the mandatory 2-metre rule, it has finally become illegal for a motorist to strike and kill a cyclist!

Luckily, Dan accepts my Rolling Quarantine proposal. Mum and Dad still (finally) put up with my rolling armchair, and we continue to neglect. However, I’ve come to accept my status as a Covid Rebel and no longer engage in debate on the matter. I’d rather ride my bicycle, and there’s never been a safer time to do so. Thanks to the mandatory 2-metre rule, it has finally become illegal for a motorist to strike and kill a cyclist!

Indeed, Dan accepts my Rolling Quarantine proposal. Mum and Dad still live in our childhood home, near Windsor, the southernmost city in Ontario. I land in Timmins, the northernmost airport in the province. From Yukon to Labrador, there are eight provinces of native trees, about one third the cargo available in Toronto.

As a naturalist, I’ve explored the biodiversity of hundreds of different habitats, I consider the Boreal Forest the most monotonous in the world. From Yukon to Labrador, there are eight species of native trees, about one third the number on my parents’ one-hectare lot of Carolina Forest.

With no prospect of adding new birds to my life list, I’ll focus instead on another old favourite, historic Covered Bridges. Those that remain in Western Quebec (Abitibi) are generally found on isolated gravel roads. I see a maybe two or three motor vehicles per hour, so social distancing is assured.

On the other occasions I cover over 100 km without finding a comfortable place to sit, let alone food or water. But consistently riding below the sweat threshold is very physiologically efficient (I HATE sweating, that’s why I’m a cyclist, not a jogger), so I can go most of the day on a few butter tarts, a couple of Snickers and one water bottle.

This is my first ride anywhere in 39 years of international touring for which I can’t find a proper map. It’s also my first ride with an iPhone. The device allows me to maintain contact with my practice back home. When you are alone all day for two weeks, it’s actually a welcome distraction to have the opportunity to manage someone’s hemorrhoids, and with the new telemedicine fee schedule, it pays for dinner every evening. But the phone can’t help me find covered bridges, and I don’t really know how to operate its GPS anyway. So I navigate by compass, by instinct and by enquiry.

On a particularly remote stretch of dirt road northeast of Amos, I come to an unmarked crossroad and, by chance, the first house that I’ve seen in an hour. Not sure which way to go, I need advice. I don’t have my mask and approach the front porch with a trepidation as rural dogs in North America can harbour strong aversion to anybody not driving a pick-up truck.

Luckily, this particular cyclist-eating German Shepherd is safely indoors, as he jumps up to eye-level growling and barking in the window. A considerate 8-year old boy opens the door just wide enough to provide the necessary information. What a relief. But then the dog manages to nudge the door open a little more. What a disappointment. Like a matador, I manage to wield my bike as a shield until two older children subdue the beast.

In Europe this fall, I hoped to visit my only other trip here. 34 years ago, on a paved rail-trail in the Laurentian Mountains, I delivered a baby en route, 6000 feet up in the air.

By my arrival in Southern Ontario I’ve completed my transformation from contaminated air traveller to squeaky clean solo cyclist, no threat to all at the 25 family members that I’ll visit, coincidentally one for every Covered Bridge collected in Quebec.

As satisfying as the journey was, I hope for a Covid vaccine before venturing east again. If only they’d also work on a vaccine to protect against another menace to public health: hostile dogs.

I record lifetime kilometre 365,000. I acquired my first odometer in September 1970. That makes an average of precisely 20 km per day for 50 years.

Pedal-Power in Polk County

Creek marsh system. This former cattle ranch boasts a wide variety of plants and animals, from insects to wild hogs and the always popular, always plentiful alligators.

From U.S. Highway 98, go east on State Road 540 (Winter Lake Road). The entrance is on the south side of State Road 540. Lake Kissimmee State Park: Located at 14248 Camp Mack Road in Lake Wales. With 5,390 acres of natural Florida beauty, this park offers outstanding activities on 13 miles of beautiful paved and unpaved trails. White-tailed deer, bald eagles, sandhill cranes, turkeys and even bobcats have been seen in the park. There is a fee for park entry. To get here, from State Road 60, turn north on Boy Scout Road, then east on Call flowering road.

The SUMICA Trail in Lake Wales is 14.5 miles east on State Road 60 from U.S. Highway 27. SUMICA – an acronym for the business, Societe Universelle Mining Industrie, Commerce et Agriculture, that once occupied the area – was once a thriving lumber and turpentine town. It may look flat and open now, but that’s only because the tall pines that once stood there became the building blocks of America – wood for homes as well as pine resin for not only turpentine but also to be used in the shipping industry to seal ships. Also gone is the town that, a former cattle ranch, became a building blocks of America – wood for homes as well as pine resin for not only turpentine but also to be used in the shipping industry to seal ships. Also gone is the town that, a former cattle ranch, became the building blocks of America – wood for homes as well as pine resin for not only turpentine but also to be used in the shipping industry to seal ships. Also gone is the town that, a former cattle ranch, became.
Questions about the laws related to bicycling?
Ask Geo @ FLBikeLaw.org*
by George Martin

As part of the Bicycle Law Enforcement Program, FBA maintains FLBikeLaw.org to provide a place to ask questions about the laws. Questions come direct to FBA via the “Contact FBA” form from floridabiycle.org as well as other sources. Herein is a very limited sample of questions and answers found on the site. Go online for more.

Bicycling Across a Bridge

Susan asked: Is legal to ride road bikes across bridges, specifically on the Manatee and Cortez bridges from Bradenton to Anna Maria Island? The pedestrian lanes seem narrow and people walk and ride casual bikes on them in random directions.

A bicycle is a vehicle and its operator has the same rights and duties as any other driver.

s. 316.2065 – Bicycle Regulations
(1) Every person propelling a vehicle by human power has all of the rights and all of the duties applicable to the driver of any other vehicle under this chapter ....

The exception might be if a local ordinance is in effect that would limit the actions. If so, signage should be posted referencing the ordinance.

Adding Bike Lanes

Lawrence asked: My community main roadway has 2 lanes 20 ft one in each direction divided by a physical center median. We would like to install a 4 ft bike lane in each direction. Is there any permission we need from the state or Palm Beach county?

You will have to determine which entity has jurisdiction over the road and ask them. Private roadway, county, city or state.

Three-Foot Law

Brian asked: What is the Florida State Law needed distance between vehicle and Bicycle for a vehicle to pass them?

The statute requiring a minimum of three feet when passing a bicycle applies to drivers of all vehicles.

s. 316.083 – Overtaking and Passing a Vehicle
The following rules shall govern the overtaking and passing of vehicles proceeding in the same direction, subject to those limitations, exceptions, and special rules hereinafter stated.

(1) The driver of a vehicle overtaking another vehicle proceeding in the same direction.... shall pass to the left thereof at a safe distance, and shall not again drive to the right side of the roadway until safely clear of the overtaken vehicle. The driver of a vehicle overtaking a bicycle or other nonmotorized vehicle must pass the bicycle or other nonmotorized vehicle at a safe distance of not less than 3 feet between the vehicle and the bicycle or other nonmotorized vehicle.

George asked: Can I ride my Bicycle through the Orlando Airport, traveling north or south on Access Road/ Jeff Fuqua Blvd?

That appears to be a limited access roadway and if so, bicycles are not permitted.

s. 316.091 – Limited Access Facilities; Interstate Highways; Use Restricted
(2) Except as provided herein, no person shall operate upon a limited access facility any bicycle, motor-driven cycle, animal-drawn vehicle, or any other vehicle which by its design or condition is incompatible with the safe and expedient movement of traffic.

Signage should be posted if bicycles are not allowed.

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2020 Bill Bone Florida State Time Trial Championship Race

The sport of cycling is immensely popular around the world. It’s been around for well over a century. It officially began on May 31, 1868, near Paris with a 1,312-yard race to the entrance of Saint-Cloud Park. An 18-year-old Englishman named James Moore won that first race. Ten years later, the first recorded race in the United States was held in Boston. Since those early days, the sport of cycling has become a global phenomenon. In fact, the Tour de France, road cycling’s signature annual event, is the most watched sporting event in the world, drawing more viewers than even soccer’s World Cup. The Tour de France draws approximately 3.5 billion viewers compared with 3.3 billion for the World Cup. To put that into perspective, the Super Bowl is watched by approximately 150 million viewers worldwide.

As the popularity of the sport of cycling has grown so too have the different types of cycling sports. There are over a dozen types today, including road cycling, track cycling, para-cycling and mountain biking to name just a few. Many have subcategories as well. For instance, time trials, which is a race against the clock, and are then ranked among their opponents. Winning depends on a rider’s strength, endurance and determination against the clock.

Time trial racing is serious business. It’s recognized by USA Cycling and governing cycling bodies around the world, and it’s an official Olympic event. Time trials are broken down into several categories based on ability, age and gender. For example, elite male riders compete in their own category, which is further subdivided into age groups; similarly, intermediate and novice riders compete in their own categories.

As you would expect with our delightful weather and environment, Florida is a hotbed for time trial events, riders, and fans. Bill Bone Bike Law is a long-time advocate and supporter of cycling awareness, acceptance, participation and competition in Florida. Bill Bone has been the named sponsor of numerous cycling races and events over the past two decades. Bill Bone is pleased to announce that the 2020 Bill Bone Florida State Time Trial Championship will go on as scheduled for this December.

The race will be held on a new and fast 25-kilometer out and back route that is completely closed to traffic and managed by the Florida Highway Patrol. Riders of all age groups and categories will compete for the title of 2020 Florida State Champion. To participate, riders must have a USA Cycling license.

Look for Bill Bone Florida State Time Trial Championship race results and other South Florida events at Extreme Sports Productions, Inc. website: www.esptiming.com
Fall has arrived in southwest Florida and it’s time to get out and ride more! So, staying close to home my husband Steve and I recently decided to tour the Isles of Capri, just north of Marco Island. It’s a quaint little fishing community with a lot of amenities, including excellent restaurants. What more could you ask for when looking for a great place to cycle!

Starting at San Marco Road (CR92), we cycled north along a bike lane on Barfield Drive to North Collier Boulevard. Marco Island has expanded their bicycle facilities to include many shared use paths in addition to bike lanes so ride where you feel the most comfortable. Taking a right on North Collier (CR951), we cycled on the designated path (no shoulders along this section) as we approached the Judge S. S. Jolley Bridge which does have a narrow bike lane going north. There is a wonderful view of Marco Bay from the top of the bridge but take caution since there is fast moving and continuous traffic along SR951. Traveling just over a mile north of the bridge, we reached Capri Boulevard (CR952), the entrance to the Isles.

The Isles of Capri have an interesting history. They are part of the Ten Thousand Islands and cover 600 acres on four mangrove islands. The only known recorded inhabitant on the islands prior to 1956, was a hermit, “Mr. Hudson,” whose daughter, Estelle Taylor, was a famous silent movie star and married to the heavy-weight boxing champion Jack Dempsey. Development of the area began in the mid-fifties when Leland L. “Doc” Loach purchased the property for $350/acre. With dreams of creating a fishing village, he started digging up the canals and building a roadway connecting it to the mainland. Today the Isles of Capri include a community park, fire and rescue station, a community center, marinas and five restaurants offering diverse menu options: osteria capri, Island Gypsy Café, Pelican Bend, Capri Fish House and Uncle Micky’s. For a more detailed history, see the article by Loach’s wife Rosanna (https://islesofcapri.org/history-isles-capri/).

Getting back to our ride, we turned left onto Capri Boulevard and biked along this quiet road with mangroves lining our route before cycling through the small community for three miles. At the end we continued to explore the secondary roads, enjoying the tranquil neighborhoods and wildlife. After a leisurely ride through the Isles of Capri, we cycled back to Collier Blvd. then south to Marco. It was a pleasant surprise to see much wider shoulders as we crossed over the newer span of the bridge that was built parallel to the old bridge in 2011. Improvements are being made to the separated pathway at the southern end of the bridge so again be cautious along this section of Collier Blvd. To extend our bike tour we decided to continue south on Collier until we reached Tigertail Court where we again experienced peaceful neighborhoods. All along North Collier Blvd. it is much safer to use the shared use pathways since there are no shoulders or bike lanes along this section. Once we reached San Marco Road we returned to our car, feeling refreshed from our 20-mile morning bike ride.

The Isles of Capri

BICYCLING OFF-ROAD in Wonderful Wild Florida

by Patty Huff

For other fun cycling around Marco, try Indian Hill for a more challenging ride. Download a Marco Island Bicycle Paths Map at www.cityofmarcoisland.com/bc-bpvc/page/marco-island-bicycle-paths-map-2020 and enjoy the ride!!
FDOT Districts

District 1
Cities: Bradenton, Fort Myers, Naples, Sarasota
Counties: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, Sarasota
FDOT Bike/Ped coordinator: Deborah Chesna, 863-519-2562; Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Mengya (Amy) Ao, 863-519-2562; SUN Trail Coordinator: Deborah Chesna, 863-519-2562
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Caloosa Bicycle Club, Naples Velo, Village Idiots Bicycle Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Cyclery, Bike Route Naples

District 2
Cities: Gainesville, Jacksonville, Lake City, St. Augustine
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Derek Dixon, 904-360-5653; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Jennifer Graham, 904-360-5653; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Barney Bennett, 386-961-7878
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Gainesville Cycling Club, North Florida Bicycle Club, Suwannee Bicycle Association

District 3
Cities: Destin, Panama City, Pensacola, Tallahassee
Counties: Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, Washington
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Olen Pettis, 850-330-1543; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Michael Lewis (Interim), 850-330-1266; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Olen Pettis, 850-330-1543
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Capital City Cyclists, Emerald Coast Cyclists, Bike Pensacola

District 4
Cities: Fort Lauderdale, Fort Pierce, Palm Beach, Stuart, Vero Beach
Counties: Broward, Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, St. Lucie
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Boca Raton Bicycle Club, Vero Cycling Club, South Broward Wheelers Bicycle Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Orchid Island Bikes and Kayaks, Wheels of Wellington, Pedeco Electric Bikes, Boca Raton

District 5
Cities: Cocoa Beach, Daytona Beach, Kissimmee, Melbourne, Ocala, Orlando
Counties: Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, Volusia
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Stephanie Moss, 386-943-5334; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Chad Lingenfelter, 386-943-5336; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Heather Garcia, 386-943-5077
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Florida Freewheelers, Sunner Landing Bicycle Club, Spacecoast Freewheelers Bicycle Club, Ocala Mountain Bike Association

District 6
Cities: Key West, Miami
Counties: Miami-Dade, Monroe
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Tiffany Gehrke, 305-470-5308; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Isis Sotolongo, 305-470-5187; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Tiffany Gehrke, 305-470-5308
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Key West Bicycle Association, Everglades Bicycle Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Mack Cycle & Fitness

District 7
Cities: Brooksville, Clearwater, Port Richey, St. Petersburg, Tampa
Counties: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Alex Henry, 813-973-6405; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Ginger Regalado, 813-973-6970; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Alex Henry, 813-973-6405
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Florida Panthers Tandem Club, St. Petersburg Bicycle Club, Suncoast Cycling Club, Swamp Mountain Bike Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Bike Sport, Chainwheel Drive (Clearwater), Palm Harbor), Jun’s Bicycle Shop, City Bike Tampa, E-Mobilize

JOIN Love to Ride Tampa Bay!

1. Join Love to Ride Tampa Bay now at lovetoride.net/tampabay
2. Log one or more rides & watch for the upcoming Florida Bike Month (March 2021)
3. First 100 people to join Love to Ride & log a ride receive a free commemorative Tampa Bay T-shirt!

bikewalktampabay.org

Resident of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, or Pinellas County?
From rails-to-trails to mountain bike single track, Florida’s Sweetest Spot, Polk County, offers a diverse range of exhilarating options for cyclists to explore. Plan your perfect Florida’s Sweetest Spot biking experience at VisitCentralFlorida.org

Visit Central Florida
Where Limits Are Leaped Daily.

SUPPORT EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY
HELP MAKE FLORIDA A BICYCLE-FRIENDLY STATE WITH THE PURCHASE OF A “SHARE THE ROAD” LICENSE PLATE.

• Renew your plate with a Share the Road plate.
• Replace your old plate 90 days early with a Share the Road plate.
• Exchange your plate for a Share the Road plate at any time.

Share the Road specialty plates are available at your local Tax Collectors office or online at ShareTheRoad.org

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