Women Ride Coast-to-Coast During Inaugural Sunflower Bicycle Tour

Named for the Florida beach sunflower, a hardy native to Florida’s coastlines and a symbol of grit and determination, the first Sunflower Bicycle Tour took women riders along the Coast-to-Coast (C2C) trail, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. Bike Florida and Bike/Walk Tampa Bay (BWTB) joined forces to create and plan the inaugural Sunflower Bicycle Tour, the first women-only tour across Florida. The C2C trail is currently more than 80 percent complete and links communities between Titusville and St. Petersburg along its entire length.

On March 30, 2022, 34 women from across the US and ages ranging from early thirties to early eighties, gathered at the Titusville Welcome Center for a hearty breakfast before beginning the tour. The four-day itinerary included over 200 miles of riding with three overnight stops, first in Lake Mary, second in Clermont, and the third and final night near the Starkey Gap Trail in Pasco County. On the last day of the tour, riders spent a beautiful day riding the Pinellas Trail before ending in downtown St. Petersburg, Florida.

“Our first Sunflower Tour was a success on so many levels! The women riders forged friendships, broke personal best cycling records, and took time to appreciate the nature and beauty that is the Florida trail system,” expressed Lisa M. Lake, executive director of Bike Florida. “What could be better? Bike Florida’s mission is to help Florida communities improve their economic health, bicycle infrastructure, and safety through bicycle tourism. Riders stopped at local businesses along the way, supporting tourism efforts in the many small communities adjacent to the trail.

In recognition of all women who bicycle, a Sunflower Proclamation declaring safety priorities was developed during the planning of the tour. BWTB Chair, Dave Andreychuk, was first to sign the Proclamation on behalf of the BWTB coalition. While largely symbolic, the Proclamation was also signed by other community leaders along the C2C Trail. Pasco County took it to the next level, creating an official Proclamation based on the ceremonial version prepared for the tour. Pasco County Commissioner, Kathryn Starkey and the entire Pasco County Board of County Commissioners signed the Proclamation, formally declaring to the general public that the county government stands behind prioritizing safety for bicyclists.

“In recent years, Pasco County has significantly increased trail and lane connectivity and supporting tourism efforts across Florida. Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organization. “We built it and they came; prioritizing safety and highlighting these incredible community assets is a crucial component to the efforts we’re making in Pasco County.” Tour riders were invited to stop at the Starkey Market, adjacent to the Starkey Gap Trail, to enjoy a free beverage and meet Tina, who served as the host and greeter on behalf of Pasco County. Tina also presented the signed official Proclamation to tour leaders in an informal ceremony held at the market.

“We are dedicated to encouraging, supporting, and making bicycling accessible to women of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities,” said Julie Bond, program director for BWTB. “When women ride bicycles, they pave the way for a future where everyone can ride safely!” Looking ahead, Bike Florida and BWTB anticipate hosting future Sunflower Bicycle Tours and other events that focus on women riders.

Join FBA Today!

Student/Living Lightly ............... $15
Snowbird ............................... $15
Individual ............................. $25
Family .................................. $35
Bicycle Club ......................... $100
Bicycle Shop ......................... $100
Business/Organization .............. $100
Government Agency .................. $100

Pay online or make check payable and mail to: Florida Bicycle Association
P.O. Box 2452, Oldsmar FL 34677

**Individual/Family High Donor Memberships:**
- Lifetime (contact FBA)
- Legacy ($500+)
- Champion ($250-$499)
- Benefactor ($100-$249)
- Supporter ($50-$99)

**Business/Organization Categories:**
- Premier Partner ($10,000+)
- Champion ($5,000-$9,999)
- Patron ($2,500-$4,999)
- Advocate ($500-$2,499)
- Member Clubs & Shops ($100)

**We Love Our Members!**

**Lifetime Members**
- The Ackerman Family Trust
- Dale Allen
- Duke Breitenbach
- Kimberly Cooper
- Thomas DeMarco
- David Henderson
- Colin Hines
- William R. Hough
- Patricia Huff
- Walter Long
- Dan Moser
- David and Heather Nagy
- James Nash
- Mr. & Mrs. H. Middleton
- Raynal
- Earle & Laura Reynolds
- Dr. Joe Warren
- Mighk & Carol Wilson

**Individual/Family High Donors**
- Champion: Donald and Sandy Brody
- Benefactor: Dave and Sue Breckenfelder
- Mark Dillon
- Morris Futernick
- George Palaidis
- Terril Parrott
- Mark Sekelsky

**Supporter:**
- Ed Barsotti
- Mary Beth and Gerardo Garcia
- Gene Kucekloski

**Club/Business High Donors**
- Premier Partners:
  - Alert Today Florida
  - Polk County Sports Marketing
- Champion:
  - Florida Freewheelers Bicycle Club
- Advocate:
  - AAA - The Auto Club Group
  - Abrahamson & Uiterwyk
  - Bill Bone Bike Law
  - Boca Raton Bicycle Club
  - Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club
  - Jim Dodson Law
  - Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation
  - Friends of River of Grass
  - Gainesville Cycling Club
  - Gulf Coast Velo
  - Jack the Bikeman
  - North Florida Bicycle Club
  - Ocala Mountain Bike Association
  - Orange Cycle
  - Quest Corporation of America, Inc.
  - Sibley Dolman Gipe Accident Injury Lawyers, PA
  - Village Idiots Cycling Club

**New Members**
- Amanda Beal
- David Bellotti
- Gidget Bennett
- Sheila Bianco
- Peter Bock
- Linda Breum
- James Burns
- Barbara Chasse
- Jim Cryder
- Anthony Dejesus
- Brenda Dorn
- Roger Fidler
- Ellen Gainer
- Bob Gallo
- Maria Garcia
- Steven Harris
- Ralph Hegman
- Edwin Henneken
- Steve Herndon
- Alvon Kimball
- Eric Kreher
- Marie Leone
- Kenneth May
- Tom Mead
- Mike Nelson
- Arodis Rodriguez
- Alejandro Sanchez
- Jose Santiago
- Greg Sternberg
- Brenda Tate
- Jonathan Tomassetti
- John Valulis
- Mark VanRaam
- Jodi Walborn
- Charlene Westman
- Deborah Wharf
- Linda Wheeling

**New Businesses**
- Brannon & Brannon Personal Injury Attorneys
- Lavent Law Personal Injury Lawyer
- Friends of River of Grass

Memberships include a subscription to the quarterly Messenger, access to online member forums and general sense of satisfaction for supporting bicycle education and advocacy in Florida.

Follow FBA!
- www.facebook.com/FloridaBicycleAssociation
- www.twitter.com/FloridaBicycle

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
Board of Directors
Courtney Reynolds, President – careynolds2016@gmail.com, Longwood
Patricia Huff, Vice President – smookcity@gmail.com, Everglades City
Steele Olmstead, Past Vice President – jhc05d@gmail.com
Yvonne Nyakana, Past President – angeryan25@yahoo.com
Laura Minns, Past President & Founding Member, FBA, hailover@bellsouth.net
Chris LeDew, Past President, FBA, david33146@aol.com
Conroy Jacobs, Past President & Founding Member, FBA, floridabicyclelaw@jsteelelaw.com
Mark Schiefer, Vice President – schtrail@verizon.net, Venice
Eric Draper, Director – ericdraper@gmail.com, Tallahassee
Stuart Messenger, Secretary – stuart@floridabicycle.org, Miami
Eli Stiers, Director – eli.stiers@gmail.com, Miami

Staff
Becky Afonso, Executive Director – becky@floridabicycle.org, 813-748-1513, Oldsmar
Ed Barsotti, Bicycle Infrastructure Assistance Program Director – ed@floridabicycle.org, Ocala

Advisory Council
Hugh Aaron, Bike Walk Indian River County, hugh@theaaron.com
Jason Aufdenburg, Chair, River to Sea TPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Board Director of the St Johns River-to-Sea Loop Alliance, jason.aufdenburg@gmail.com
Chris Burns, Chair, Jacksonville Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, chris@floridacyclinglaw.com
Keri Caffrey, Co-Founder, CyclingSavvy, Program Consultant, American Bicycling Education Association, keri@abea.hke
V Christiansen, Multimodal Planner, vanechristiansen@altago.com
Julie Christesen, jtc05d@gmail.com
Dan Connaughton, Director Florida Traffic & Bicycle Safety Education Program, danc@hsph.ub.edu
Jim Dodson, Past Secretary, FBA, jim@jdodsonlaw.com
David Henderson, Past President, FBA, david33146@aol.com
Henry N. Lawrence, III, Past President & Founding Member, FBA, hnhbicycle@gmail.com
Chris LeDew, City of Jacksonville Chief of Traffic Engineering, cledew@comcast.net
Bret A Livingston, Orlando Cycling Enthusiast, rickshavrocket@gmail.com
Laura Minns, Transit/Rail Lead Planner, laurea77@gmail.com
Dan Moser, Bike/Ped/Traffic Safety Consultant, bikepedmoser@gmail.com
Yvonne Nyakana, Black Girls Do Bike/Miami, gobavmi@gmail.com
Steele Olmstead, Past President, FBA, floridabicyclleveland@steelolaw.com
Angelo Rao, Past Vice President, angeryan25@yahoo.com
Angela Ryan, Past Vice President, angelyaran25@yahoo.com
Paula Saracki, FBA Messenger, paula@impactgrafx.com

FBA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Saturday, July 23, 1-4 PM
TECO Hall at the Oldsmar Public Library
400 St. Petersburg Drive East, Oldsmar, FL 34677
Make your plans to join the FBA Board of Directors for our Annual Membership meeting on Saturday, July 23, in Oldsmar (FBA Headquarters!).

2022 marks our 25th Anniversary celebration and there will be prizes! Members and soon-to-be members are invited to attend.
Snacks and other goodies provided along with information and idea sharing from YOU!

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

Help Us Grow the Base! Give to FBA
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 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.

Members are invited to attend.
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.

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
 tackle our Annual Membership meeting on Saturday, July 23, in Oldsmar (FBA Headquarters!).

Snacks and other goodies provided along with information and idea sharing from YOU!

City names denote board and program staff member distribution. Is your area represented? Contact a board member today.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.
Daytona Beach Update by Jason Aufdenberg, FBA Advisory Council

State Road 430 splits into Oakridge Blvd and its companion, the one-way, westbound Seabreeze Blvd on the beach side. Seabreeze Blvd is next for a bike-lane makeover with plans to remove parking on the south side of the street, replacing the conventional 5-foot bike lane with a protected bike lane in the between the sidewalk and parking. This is part of a much larger project to make nearby State Road A1A friendlier for all modes.

On the other side the intracoastal waterway in Daytona Beach lies the Riverfront Esplanade, under complete renovation for the last two years. The renovation includes the complete reconstruction of nearly one mile of the 3,000-mile East Coast Greenway, also part of the five-county 260-mile St Johns River to Sea Loop. The section between Main St and International Speedway Blvd opens June 4th, including the critical bridge connection under US-92, which allows people to avoid crossing this busy arterial road. Once the US-92 to Orange Avenue renovations are complete in 2023, the 4-mile East Coast Greenway will be complete within the city limits of Daytona Beach.

In the photo: My first ride, in late February, on the new (and first Zick-Zipper) curb-protected bike lane in Daytona Beach, running along Oakridge Blvd (SR 430) for 4.5 blocks.

(right) Sneak peek of the reconstructed trail, part of the Riverfront Esplanade in Daytona Beach due to open on June 4th.


Jason has been teaching physics and astronomy at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach since 2006. He has been bicycling for transportation for 28 years and has served on the River-to-Sea Transportation Planning Organization’s Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, representing Volusia-at-Large, since 2012 and has served on the board of directors of the St Johns River to Sea Loop Alliance since 2016. He is a member of FBA and its Advisory Council. He has developed a free bike map for Daytona Beach the works on iOS and Android phones, more info at bicycledaytona.org.

Transitions and Transformations by Courtney Reynolds, FBA President

As a native Floridian, I have never really experienced the four seasons (unless you include hurricane season and lovebug season). I imagine what it must be like living in other places, where the color of the leaves marks the passage of time. Instead, the months and years are marked by local politics, job changes, and the passing of good friends. There have been with work with her so closely, but I know that her departure as FBA’s Executive Director is not the end of our friendship. (Sorry Becky, you can’t get rid of me so easily.)

A Trails Summit was held in DeBary (Volusia County) back in April, with almost 100 people that are staff or volunteers from bicycle-related organizations across the state. They were brought together to discuss “trails as transportation” but the conversation kept coming back to how to share the great news that Florida is becoming more bike-friendly (read: people-friendly). There are clearly opportunities for businesses to make the most of this, for communities to double-down on the benefits and expand biking opportunities, and for individuals to get out there and ride. But who should convene this effort? Who has the authority and resources to lead a statewide effort to raise the profile of Florida as a place for cyclists? As much as we may all want the answer to be “the Florida Bicycle Association, of course” — the truth of it is that we cannot do it alone. What we can do is help assemble the right people to get them on the right bus and in the right seat, working together to determine the direction we should take. Who knows what we could accomplish if all the separate organizations that work on safety-related issues and projects were unified not just under a common vision and mission, but specific objectives and strategies? I suspect we could accomplish great things together, for the good of FBA’s current and future members.

Although this Florida girl has missed out on seasons, I am well acquainted with change. Sometimes it is sad, most of the time it is scary. But change offers us a path forward and towards transformation. With Laurà’s passing and Becky’s departure, I am not sure what transformation lies ahead for FBA. I do hope our next steps and hope FBA members will continue to support what comes next.

Support Florida Bicycle Association Inc.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates.

Go to smile.amazon.com
Executive Director’s Corner...

Farewell
by Becky Afonso, Director

This won’t be the first time I have used this column to honor the passing of a dear colleague and friend, but I do believe it to be the last (more on that later). This one hits very close to home as on April 12 of this year, Laura Hallam, former FBA Executive Director, FBA Operations Manager, FBA Administrative Assistant, American Bicycling Education Association Executive Director and just a person worth knowing, succumbed to a battle with cancer. She was 67.

I never saw myself in the ED job then, but it happened. The association needed help and I answered the call. In the eight years that I have led FBA as Executive Director, I found the job to be more about flexibility, listening and relationship building than checking off boxes of a business agenda. Once I took on the role of Executive Director, I found it challenged me to be someone I didn’t think possible – a champion for public safety. I built membership, implemented new programs and maintained a statewide presence as a cycling resource with our state legislators and other elected officials. I honed my understanding of bicycle safety education, infrastructure needs and genuine passion to promote and grow community connections through cycling.

I have witnessed the pure joy cycling brings to children with disabilities as a volunteer with iCan Shine. I have listened to the concerns voiced by various members of bicycle clubs, homeowner associations, civic groups and bicycle rehab programs, including the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida. By listening, I have been able to develop presentations and outreach for all types of audiences. The passion to make a difference, to be on a mission for the sake of cycling (that childhood freedom I fell in love with), is life changing. This has been an unforgettable journey and I like to believe I am leaving the organization and myself healthier, stronger and on track for what is next.

It may seem strange that I would leave this job, but I will always have the passion to do good work. I know the time is right for what is next for FBA leadership. Much like the 25th Anniversary safety baton this association is showcasing for the year, the reins will be passed on and the torch will burn but her spirit and energy always provided for a youthful and playful aura, despite her professional and all-business minded attitude.

Laura touched so many people; I find myself still processing and coming to terms in seeing her passing not as a loss but as the light within her continuing to shine in all that she touched (which is an eternal connection). I imagine this as the numerous fond memories so many people have of Laura; a mere column would not do this justice, but I will share a tad of my memories.

I first met Laura in 2001 at what may have been her first FBA Board meeting as the newly hired Executive Director; this would have been when Tina Russo was president and used a meeting facility at the Upper Tampa Bay Trail main trailhead. Oddly enough, Laura’s last Board meeting as FBA Executive Director was held at our family’s home in Oldsmar during the weekend of January 28/29, 2011. I’m grateful the relationship and friendship continued and lasted for 21 years; something she framed as us being ‘kindred spirits.’

I don’t have many photos of Laura, well, let me correct that by saying I don’t have many clear photos of Laura. I admit, there are many blurry photos taken throughout our adventures, but the one I offer this publication is a clear photo of Laura and I at the Land Bridge of the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway over Interstate 75 in Ocala. We rode out there to a quarterly FBA Board of Directors meeting in April of 2017. I don’t mind that we are in bicycle attire and wearing shades; that’s how we rode. Rest in peace, Laura.

This final tribute of a column is due to my decision to resign the post of Executive Director. I often joke that being the Executive Director of FBA was not a conversation with my high school Guidance Counselor, and no joke, it wasn’t. My dream in high school was to become a writer, majoring in college with a BA in Mass Communications. I also love bicycling, and became one of the first 100 to join FBA when it reformed in 1997.

Welcome Eric Draper

FBA is pleased to announce Eric Draper as our most recent appointee to the Board of Directors. Eric is an avid cyclist and with his background, will provide strategic advice on environmental finance and policy to businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

Draper serves on the Capital City Cyclists board and the Tallahassee-Leon County Joint Bicycle Working Group. He recently completed service as Director of the Florida Park Service. Under his leadership, Florida State Parks became the first four-time winner of the National Recreation and Parks Association’s Gold Medal for Excellence. Draper is recognized for raising park ranger pay, updating training, increasing revenue and budgets, advancing water restoration projects, promoting trails, and encouraging park volunteers and philanthropy.

Before being asked to lead the Florida Park Service, Draper was Executive Director of Audubon Florida, the state’s most influential conservation organization. He raised a $7 million annual budget, recruited a philanthropic board, managed a team of 90 staff, and grew Audubon’s chapter and volunteer networks. Previously, he was Senior Vice President for Policy at the National Audubon Society, the Florida House of Representatives Majority Office staff director, The Nature Conservancy’s Florida government relations director, and Clean Water Action’s national campaigns director.

During his 30-year conservation career, Draper was a leading advocate for water and land conservation and Everglades restoration. He was known for being able to work with business and agency leaders. He was credited with helping secure billions in new conservation and restoration spending and influencing many major Florida environmental policy decisions.

Draper is from Tampa and studied Philosophy at the University of South Florida. He lives in Tallahassee.

Different (Pedal) Strokes for Different Folks
by PATTY HUFF

How do you like to ride? With a group or alone? On the road or trails? On a mountain bike, road bike, tandem, unicycle, or electric? To work, errands around town, for recreation, or across the U.S.? Different strokes for different folks.

We all have numerous ways we like to ride. We have various types of bicycles and places we like to go. One thing we all have in common is our love of the ride, the feeling of freedom and exhilaration, the exercise, the scenery, the people we meet, etc., etc., etc.

The Florida Bicycle Association is for all cyclists throughout Florida, promoting bicycle education and encouraging cycling. So, how can we all live (bike) together happily ever after? We do it with respect and understanding. Not everyone likes to cycle 20+ mph but some do. These cyclists want to be on the road, have the freedom to ride wherever they want along our roads and highways, so we need to be sure that we have the regulations in place to protect them. We also should respect these cyclists for the freedom they enjoy; but they also, need to respect other cyclists either on the road or bike trails who prefer to ride at a slower pace. The relationship between these cyclists and motorists – both legal street vehicles in the eyes of the law – are the same; respect each other’s mode of transportation, and be courteous with other when sharing the road.

Then there are the cyclists who like long-distance cycling on back roads with the open air, the breeze, the cornfields, orange groves, quiet neighborhoods, small towns, the diversity of the land and the sheer delight of being outdoors on the seat of a bike. They, too, need courtesy and respect on the road. We may see a variety of bikes on our multi-use trails, including e-bikes. As we practice sharing the road, we must also practice sharing the trails: families riding together, pedestrians, dog (continued on next page)
walkers, cyclists out for fun, others cycling to work. All types, all modes: what we can do is respect their rights and enjoy the ride.

I received a note today that a local cyclist (Ironman) from Chekoloskee who was biking along a county road just north of Egervelds City when a truck veered off and into the bike lane, forcing the cyclist off the road. The truck did not stop; and the cyclist was found lying on the side of the road, almost incoherent. His scalpula was fractured, ribs broken, and was taken to the hospital where a metal plate was inserted to stabilize his clavicle. All this happened while just going out for a Sunday ride. No matter how vigilant or experienced we are on our bikes, things happen. It was fortunate that this cyclist didn’t get hit by the truck, but his ability to avoid a direct crash with the truck was still devastating. He’s recovering at home now and says he’s determined to get back on his bike and continue his training. R-E-S-P-E-C-T and COURTESY are the key words. No matter where we ride – on road, off road, in traffic, or on quiet country roads, be alert and careful. What keeps me so committed to FHA – our Vision is for bicycling to be safe, accepted and encouraged in Florida – a shared responsibility.

Today I dedicated my 10-mile early morning bike ride to Laura Hallam on the day her family and friends are sharing a Celebration of Life for her. She was a kind, loving, beautiful person who left us much too soon. She was a true advocate for safe cycling and will be remembered by all her friends at FHA.

Different (Pedal) Strokes (continued from page 5)

Lessons from a Year-Long African Bike Tour

A South African family of four taking a cycling trip together doesn’t sound all that unusual. But a collective, year-long bike tour of Africa, Cape Town to Zanzibar and back, was something else, according to Tegan Phillips, its 22-year-old participant and chronicler.

In her article, “I Rode 7000 Miles Across Africa,” she recounted that, starting in February 2015, the family initially averaged 35–40 miles per day before making camp, pitching tents, and cooking dinner. By the end of the trip they were cycling 80 miles a day. Beyond strength gained from physical challenges, there were five life-changing lessons Tegan gained from her family’s awesome adventure.

Riding through dramatically diverse terrains and experiencing even more diverse cultures, Tegan described the contracting scenes they encountered:

I learned about wildlife—like how to respond when approached by a lion … I learned … how to make a stew out of a beer can. I also found out that “hakuna matata” is a Swahili phrase that really does mean “no worries.” More significantly, I learned about people. About commercial farmers with unusual hobbies in northern South Africa, and farmers with clever children in rural eastern Zimbabwe. I learned the stories of the riders in the Rwandan National Cycling team and of their unconventional American coaches. I learned about my family, about my mother’s courage and my own sometimes problematic sensitivity. Every day felt like a thousand lessons …

The first of those lessons was that the long-term preparation period for the trip didn’t mean (as she thought) it was all going to be an “epic” adventure. Instead she found that epic preparation was actually regular preparation with a hardcore endurance element, and that maybe anybody could do it. The second lesson she summarized as “There’s something to be said for ‘sucking it up.’” When mishaps, problems, and delays inevitably happened, she gradually stopped feeling entitled and grumpy and just did what needed to be done. It was an attitude transformation she described as “one of the most useful things I learned” because she could apply it to any difficult situation in the future.

The third lesson: “Nothing cultivates gratitude like context.” The more Tegan encountered wildlife along the roads and fields of her native continent, the more she thought about where her food came from. Having to carry enough water on her bike for all her daily needs, she grew in appreciation for that precious resource.

The fourth lesson involved unexpected diversity and unexpected similarity. She wrote, “In so many of the places that we imagined we’d find homogeneity, we found diversity—and at the same time, where we’d expected to find foreignness, we often found familiarity. Many of our biggest differences, it seems, do not stretch beyond a layer of superficiality that can be quickly discarded over the sharing of a meal.”

The fifth lesson Tegan recounted was about assessing risk and dealing with adversity. Asking questions like should they knock on a stranger’s door for help or why did she have to contract malaria, the young woman found things that were initially scary turned out to be survivable. And that adversity is inevitable but “living a full, interesting life, on the other hand, is not.”

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. His primary office is in Clearwater and he represents injury victims throughout Florida. His book, Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook, answers commonly asked questions by injured cyclists and is 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.

Where My Ride Takes Me

FBA Executive Director Becky Afonso participating in the City of Orlando Rides with the Mayor

Introducing Paradise Coast Trail

by Michelle Avola-Brown, Executive Director, Naples Pathways Coalition

A cross the country and throughout Florida, places like Dunedin, Winter Garden, and Inverness enjoy extensive, connected multi-modal pathways, but surprisingly, Naples does not.

In 2018, the Naples Pathways Coalition developed the vision for the Paradise Coast Trail – a new 70-mile separated, paved trail that will connect Naples to Bonita Springs, Collier Seminole State Park, Ave Maria, and other areas within and beyond Collier County. It will expand transportation options, improve health and wellness, reduce our carbon footprint, and provide a destination to experience the Paradise Coast’s unique beauty. The PCT will drive quality of life and healthier lifestyles, yield economic benefits to the county, increases property values, and enable enhanced safety for walkers, runners, and recreational and commuter bicyclists.

Many communities, Winter Garden and Dunedin, for example, have been transformed by the presence of a multi-use trail. The West Orange Trail has been a critical component behind the transformation of Downtown Winter Garden, and the city was even recognized in 2018 as a Great Places in Florida winner. Dunedin’s makeover has been just as significant. Downtown business occupancy rates were 30% before the Pinellas Trail came through but have been nearly 100% since the trail opened over two decades ago.

The economics of trails are well-documented. Three Central Florida trails were estimated to have a regional economic impact of $42.6 million annually. Greenways, sidewalks, and bicycle facility construction create 17 jobs for every $1 million spent, which has a more substantial employment impact than any other type of transportation facility.

A North Carolina DOT study found that the annual economic impact of bicyclists was nine times the initial one-time public expenditure to build bicycle facilities. Trails are also one of the most desired community amenities among prospective homebuyers. Studies show the importance of developing long-distance trails like the PCT. The longer a trail is, the farther people will travel to visit it, the longer they will stay, and the more money they will spend.

Trails also provide healthy recreation and active transportation. A few interesting statistics:

• 43% of Americans would be more likely to ride a bicycle if motor vehicles and bicycles were physically separated (People for Bikes).

• 46% of Americans say they would bike to work if designated trails were available (Bikes Belong Coalition).

• In a 2014 Pinellas Trail survey, 31% of users surveyed in Downtown Clearwater were using the trail for commuting to work (Forward Pinellas).

Walking, jogging, and bicycling are rated as Sunshine State residents’ most desired outdoor recreation activities. In response to the obesity crisis in the US, providing access to trails is considered a vital community health strategy by the CDC.

With all these great trail benefits, it’s not surprising that Naples Pathways Coalition has received tremendous support for the Paradise Coast Trail from local businesses, residents, and visitors to Southwest Florida. Their first question is always, “when will it open?” We are thrilled that our local elected officials and City and County staff have been equally supportive.

When I met with Senator Kathleen Passidomo in 2019 to share the vision of the Paradise Coast Trail, she loved it and recognized the need for a trail system in Collier County. She offered to sponsor a Local Legislative Funding Request to pay for our feasibility study. We worked with her staff (continued on page 13)
Congratulations to our 2021 Award Recipients!

Educator: Roni Wood

Roni has an all too familiar story of being hit by a motorist while legally crossing in a crosswalk. She spent a week in the hospital and more than a year in physical therapy. She recovered, decided to turn the experience to a positive and started volunteering at Bike/Walk Central Florida. Her passion and determination earned her a part-time job in community outreach.

Roni is a certified bicycle helmet fitter and speaks to students, seniors, fellow community members and government officials about pedestrian and bicycling safety. She is outspoken about the dangers careless drivers pose to people walking and riding bicycles. She is an example of paying it forward, saving lives.

Supporting Agency: Naples Pathways Coalition

Since its official formation in 2005, Naples Pathways Coalition (NPC) has made significant progress in creating safe pathways for walking, biking and running. Successes include requesting “3 Feet it’s the Law” bumper stickers on every city and county vehicle to provide visibility as part of their education program within the community. The annual “Iron Joe bike ride” raises money to act on NPC agenda items and help encourage citizen advocacy.

The coalition’s latest project raised money to expedite the future of the Paradise Coast Trail by initiating their own study and fast track the next steps. The Paradise Coast Trail is a proposed 70+ mile isolated bicycle-pedestrian trail system linking North Naples, Naples, Bonita Springs, Immokalee, Ave Maria, and South Naples. The amount of time and effort to get all agencies on board was insurmountable and NPC did it in a reasonable amount of time. This study will provide infrastructure insights to connect planned regional trails with small towns across all of Collier County.

Program: Alert Today Florida

Alert Today Florida is the campaign brand for Florida’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program, founded in February of 2013. This “Focused Initiative” has increased awareness of pedestrian and bicycle laws and safety by 84% over the last 9 years. The program has become known as a national model for other states to follow. The website features walking, bicycling and motorist driving safety information in addition to digital media videos and downloadable files. You may request materials in English, Spanish or Creole and links are provided to other resources.

The members of the coalition are committed to eliminating pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and won’t stop until they get there. It is worth your time to click through the Alert Today Florida - https://www.alerttodayflorida.com/

Event: Ride for Tiny Town

The Ride for Tiny Town is not a ride for Arcadia, where it takes place, but is a ride/fund-raiser for a town inside of Arcadia known as the Village of Tiny Town. Tiny Town is soon to be a reality for DeSoto Cares. This community of tiny homes, in Arcadia, will provide transitional housing for the

(continued on next page)
Congratulations to our 2022 Award Recipients!

(continued from previous page)

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.

As the Outreach Director of the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, I pointed out both positive and negative concerns for the Legacy Trail as it opens major roads. As a result, theアニメ数量 and the nineteen lights have been upgraded. Rich quotes endless hours on the phone and in personal meetings lobbying for bike safety. Rich notes that "a bike-friendly street and sidewalk to separate motorists and bicycle traffic."

Citizen Advocate: Rich Garrett

Rich Garrett serves as Outreach Director for the Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club. His work involves setting up the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee. Rich Garrett is also a member of four local bike clubs: Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Seminole/Altamonte Bicycle Club, and the Village Bike Club. His representatives state that the organization has helped to create a bike-friendly community.
Elected Official Champion: Representative Christine Hunschofsky, District 96

Florida House Representative Christine Hunschofsky, District 96, was elected in 2020 and championed a FBA legislative platform initiative by sponsoring HB 605, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety bill. Although amended through the process in becoming law, Representative Hunschofsky worked with FBA to educate and advocate for the fundamentals of safer policy. Eventually CS/CS/HB 605 was Laid on Table and its Senate companion bill, CS/SB 950 passed, the association and its members owe their gratitude for the efforts and successes the bill brought to law included allowing motorists to cross a double-yellow line to safely pass cyclists and pedestrians and establishing a much-needed educational awareness campaign for motorists to give at least three-feet of space when passing a cyclist or pedestrian. Special Recognition: Mary Beth Garcia

Mary Beth Garcia was hired by FBA in 2017 to develop and implement our Ride Leader/Ride Marshal (RLRM) program. Her background in coaching and consulting professionally, along with her Everglades Bicycle Club experience of creating their Ride Leader Training and Ride Leader Program proved to be beneficial statewide. Mary Beth served as FBA’s RLRM Program Director for three years, certifying over 300 cyclists on group riding techniques and best practices. Although Mary Beth’s tenure as director ended in 2021, the program continues and appreciates her efforts to educate on safer cycling practices. Special Recognition: Dallas Smalley (posthumously)

Dallas Smalley was a devoted bicycle shop owner for over 40 years. He inspired thousands of people to ride bicycles and provided one of the best bicycle shops in Panama City, Florida starting in 1976 until his death in 2020. Dallas sponsored the Panama City Flyers Cycling Club back in the 80’s as the first bicycle club for the area. He selflessly sponsored bicycle tours, races and advocacy events to promote the benefits of cycling. Dallas Smalley was friends with FBA Founder Henry Lawrence. Henry attributes his bicycling advocacy to Dallas, a testament to a lifetime of passion and dedication for cyclists and their safety.

Congratulations to our 2021 Award Recipients! (continued from previous page)

Volunteer: Larry Luedtke with members of Bike-Walk Indian River County and Vero Cycling

Got Questions? FBA has Answers!

Are there unavoidable parts of your bicycling routes where conditions need to be better, but you don’t know who to ask and what specifically to ask for? Is your bicycle advocacy group interested in learning about different types of on- and off-road bikeway facilities and what’s possible? Our Bicycle Infrastructure Assistance (BIA) provides technical help for advocates and others, in requesting specific roadway or trail improvements by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or local agencies. Visit our website for more information and to request assistance - https://floridabicycle.org/fba-bia/
FOLA 40 by Joe Dunn, Friends of Lake Apopka President and FBA member

On Sunday, April 24th, the Friends of Lake Apopka (FOLA) hosted their 5th annual FOLA 40 bike ride around Florida’s 4th largest lake. The ride was created to raise awareness about:

- Continued restoration of Lake Apopka
- Amazing trail network around the lake
- Need to “Connect the Trails” into a safe, 40-mile cycling trail around the lake

Lake Apopka has gone from Florida’s most polluted large lake to an emerging ecotourism destination in the past 25 years, thanks to the efforts of St Johns River Water Management District and Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The lake straddles two counties, Lake and Orange. Existing trail systems completely encircle Lake Apopka except for a 3-mile stretch in the northeast (Orange County) and a 3-mile stretch in the northwest (Lake County), where cyclists must share shoulder-less roads.

Orange County expects to start construction this year on a dedicated bike path that will connect West Orange Trail to Magnolia Park (eastern trailhead for the Lake Apopka Loop Trail). Lake County also expects to begin construction this year on a dedicated bike trail that will connect Hancoc Road Trail to Green Mountain Scenic Overlook (western trailhead for the Lake Apopka Loop Trail).

Both trail connections are expected to be completed in 2024, resulting in a 42-mile safe, cycling trail around Lake Apopka. That loop will sit directly on Florida’s Coast-to-Coast Connector, so the 2024 FOLA 40 should be quite a celebration.

This year’s FOLA 40 attracted 140 cyclists who rode one of four routes: 8 miles, 16 miles, 32 miles, and the entire loop around the lake of 42 miles. The lakeside vistas and wildlife-rich wetlands attracted riders from all over the state and there were several out-of-state participants.

Join us for the 6th annual FOLA 40 next April. Details later this year at fola.org.

2022 Florida Trails Summit:
Paved Trails as Transportation
by Harry Barley, Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation Board Member and former Executive Director of MetroPlan Orlando

The Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation (FGTF) partnered with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to convene the Florida Trails Summit: Paved Trails as Transportation on April 21-22, 2022. The event was held at DeBary Hall Conference Center in DeBary.

The site and the dates for the Summit were very deliberate. DeBary Hall is a magnificent 19th century hunting estate overlooking the St. Johns River in southwest Volusia County. One of the site’s many features is the integration of the River 2Sea Loop Trail, a component of the Coast-to-Coast Trail, along with a gorgeous multi-purpose trailhead managed by Volusia County Government. The timing for this event coincided with Earth Day on Friday, April 22 and Florida Statewide Trails Day on Saturday, April 23.

The Summit had several purposes. First, it was an opportunity to celebrate widespread public support for SunTrails (an ambitious statewide network of trails) and recent milestones in the network’s evolution. Second, best practices were to be highlighted and problem areas identified. And finally, a blueprint was needed for moving ahead.

Attendees were welcomed by Volusia County Council Chairman Jeff Brower, a huge trails advocate, and DeBary Mayor Karen Chazes who told about her city becoming a “Trail Hub Community.” DeBary City Manager Carmen Rosamonda reviewed major development plans now underway that are being built around the city’s trails and the DeBary SunRail station.

FDOT officials reiterated their support for the SunTrails program, consistent with the actions taken to date by the Florida Legislature and the Office of the Governor. Status updates were provided calling attention to progress being made. Attendees were honored that Jared Perdue, the recently appointed FDOT Secretary, was able to attend and speak at an evening reception.

The Summit featured presentations from a number of communities showing how local connections are being made to (continued on page 13)
POLK COUNTY NEWS

Lake to Lake Bicycle Route

Perhaps you’ve had enough of long, winding trails in the middle of nowhere with nary a bathroom around. Or maybe you feel like mixing in a light lunch at a café or a cup of gourmet coffee at a sidewalk café on your weekend bike ride. Or heck — you just want a leisurely pedal through a mix of hip urban core and lakeside trail.

No matter the reason, the Lake to Lake Bicycle Route, a 26-mile network of paved multi-use paths that traverse numerous lakes in aptly named Lakeland, is worth the visit. While not the most physically challenging ride, this journey is a feast for the eyes and, if you choose, the stomach as well.

From the shores of oft-forgotten Lake John, the trail circles Lake Hollingsworth, running by Florida Southern College, then travels west through downtown Lakeland and by Lake Hunter, Lake Beulah, Lake Wire, Lake Mirror, Lake Morton, Lake Bonny — where it passes a second college, Southeastern University — to wind up along Lake Parker.

Here are some of the highlights you’ll see along your trek.

LAKE HOLLINGSWORTH

To say the ZIP Codes that encompass Lake Hollingsworth are exclusive might be an understatement — this is prime Central Florida real estate. Homes along Hollingsworth usually sell for well into seven figures and rarely come on to the market. Many of the homes mirror the look of the area’s most influential architect, who left his imprint in Lakeland just around the corner.

FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE

Still considered one of the most beautiful college campuses in the country, if not the world, Florida Southern College’s unique look sprung from the mind of legendary architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Tasked with creating a modern campus on the 100-acre plot, the project started before the United States entered into World War II and was completed in the late 1950s. Known today as his “Children of the Sun” collection, it is both the largest and the Southern-most example of Wright’s work.

DOWNTOWN LAKELAND

Unlike other downtowns in the state, Lakeland’s is thriving. Full of artisanal shops, high-end clothiers and places for a quick drink or fine dining, you’ll find it all circling Munn Park. If you’ve worked up an appetite, this is the spot. From a quick sandwich at Black & Brew to a Cuban from Divisivo Deli, barbecue and other Southern offerings at Mojo Federal or modern Spanish style at Nineteen61, downtown Lakeland has become a destination for the culinary adventurer. There are plenty of other options for the less adventurous, too. Palace Pizza offers simple and fast Italian comfort food while Taco Bus is a healthy and fresh Mexican taste experience. Mister Fish, while carry-out only, has been a local favorite for more than 50 years.

LAKE MIRROR

Just a few short pedals from downtown is Lake Mirror, considered by many to be the crown jewel of downtown. Circled with a promenade reminiscent of a Roman arena, the area includes Hollis Garden, a 1.2 neo-classical architectural environment complete with fountains, public art and flower beds. Just across the street from the lake is the Joinery, a modern food hall and craft brewery featuring various specialty eateries. Just down the street is La Imperial Bakery, which has breakfast and lunch with a Cuban and Puerto Rican twist Tuesdays through Saturdays. Just a few steps off the lake is The Pooriker, a cluster of buildings featuring everything from beignets to cold brew coffee and adult beverages. It is open weekends.

BUT THAT’S NOT ALL

Of course, these aren’t all the sights to see in Lakeland. For example, the Florida United Methodist Foundation building along Lake Wire is a magnificent modern structure that features cobalt-blue windows. Other options include the Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern University, just a few feet from Lake Morton, or The Red Door, just across the street, featuring craft food and beverages.

For more information, visit visitcentralflorida.com. For a map of the trail, visit lakelandgov.net and click on the link for Bicycling in Lakeland on the left-hand side.

Ascending The Mountain

Crystal Peña, a 27-year-old Florida native from Palm Beach County, seemed to have achieved quick success in her short career in mountain biking. However, the road she has traveled to get there has been far from easy.

Peña grew up in the small town of Loxahatchee, FL and was a very successful equestrian. Her and her family had a small farm consisting of horses, goats, cats, dogs, birds, etc. In her early years of horse-back riding, Peña had won multiple championships in showjumping.

Shortly after the start of her show jumping career, instead of applying to your typical “first job,” she started her own company clipping horses, showing her bright, driven, and entrepreneurial heart. Cesar would drive her to all her appointments since she was too young to drive on her own. “I remember getting upset with my dad if he tried to help. In his eyes, he would get it done quicker but, in my eyes, I wasn’t doing the job.” There he sat, for hours. Since an early age, she aspired to be the best at everything she did.

At the age of 16, Peña’s life was suddenly flipped upside down when her parents decided to divorce. “Everything I knew was suddenly ripped away in a matter of months.” Said Peña. “I became very angry.”

Peña decided to leave home when she was 17 years old. “From 17 to about 22 years old, my life was very chaotic. Some bad circumstances from flat out bad decisions that I made, some from circumstances that were out of my control. I was on my own.” Stated Crystal. “There were highs and lows but when I look back to that time period, the lows far outweighed the highs.”

It wasn’t until Crystal was 21 years old that the clouds started to part. “I was blessed with an individual, a mentor, that which plucked me from the raging waves in the ocean and carried me to safety. My mentor showed me what life could be, if you stay the course, and brought out my best qualities that I wasn’t confident enough to show to the world.” Said Peña. “I was a broken individual and somehow managed to always stay just one step away from going over the edge.”

For the next few years, Peña was in training. “I went ghost. I started to explore the world and I learned a lot about myself. I started experiencing things that I had never experienced in my life up to that point.” Said Peña. “Bottom line, it’s all how you frame your mindset. People are so afraid to step out of the box because society has trained us to live a certain way. According to society, we must live by the book, or else be judged.”

Within those few years of “finding herself,” aside from tending to her horses Bentley and Princesa, Peña decided to try a new activity and joined Palm Beach County American Poolplayers Association (APA) pool league. “I decided to try something new and joined the APA. I had played pool occasionally growing up. My neighbor had a pool table and whenever we had a get together, we would always play pool.” Said Peña.

The team made it to APA Worlds in Las Vegas, Nevada that year. Peña’s first year in the league. “That was probably one of the coolest experiences. You walk into a room filled with hundreds of pool tables with people from all over the world.”

After walking away from pool, Peña decided to take up music to fill her time. She learned to play guitar, piano and tried singing. “Turns out singing is not my forte but hey, I tried it!” Laughed Peña. “I liked guitar, but I absolutely loved piano. Once I learned to play Piano, I would get lost in the music for hours. For me, I was able to express so much emotion on the piano.”

At the end of 2019, Peña had made the incredibly difficult decision to sell her horses, Bentley and Princesa. “That was probably the most difficult decision I had to make in my life. Since a young age, horses were my life. But it came time to make an adult decision for all of us.” Said Crystal. “It was also a turning point in my life. My horses were my security. That was one thing that NO ONE could take away from me. They were my shoulder to cry on and someone to talk to, even though they (continued on page 14)
Paradise Coast Trail (continued from page 6)
on the lengthy application, and in 2020, funding for the PCT’s feasibility study was the only trail project that made it into the state’s budget! This was a big win, but it came with an unexpected $100,000 local match requirement. We fundraised, partnered with the City of Naples and Collier County, and met the match!
The feasibility study will wrap up this June. The 70-mile system will be broken into ten segments, ready for programming. Many are tied to transportation projects, which often take years to complete. We are doing everything in our power to cut that time significantly.

We look forward to state and federal funding coming our direction and hope some will go to the PCT. We have learned that local money is almost always required to match grant opportunities. To further our efforts to fast-track the PCT, we are fundraising and looking for champions who also see the importance of this trail.

Paved Trails Summit (continued from page 11)
the statewide trail network to provide a regionally-connected system. There were also candid discussions of some of the challenges being addressed in the areas of planning, design, operations, and maintenance.

Some of the topics needing attention (in no particular order) included trail branding and promotion, siting challenges and residents’ concerns, identifying the positive economic impact of trails, safety in the broadest context, providing amenities in both urban and rural areas and better integrating planning/design with operations/maintenance. There was general agreement among the attendees that there is a lot of work to be done.

Every large gathering of transportation professionals benefits from some inspiration from elsewhere and this Summit was no exception. Summit attendees learned about the Empire State Trail, an ambitious 750-mile trail in New York State and the Great Alleghany Passage connecting the Pittsburgh area to the C&O Canal leading into Washington, DC. The focus of the presentation on the Great Allegheny Passage was on research that had been conducted to quantify the economic benefits of investments in trails.

And what would any transportation summit be without a lively discussion about funding? That was a big part of the Summit too. National experts who took part in the Summit called attention to the State of Florida’s strong financial commitment to the statewide trails network, something which is lacking in many places.

There was a lot of enthusiasm about the new federal funding sources that present opportunities for trails such as the new Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program. Along with this new funding, attendees learned there are new policies in support of trails and the legislation encourages fresh approaches for addressing such things as safety, connectivity, equity, and sustainability. For example, the new legislation allows funds from the existing Transportation Alternatives Program to be used for maintenance purposes. This is a huge need which, to date, has generally been handled by local governments. The national experts at the Summit felt that Florida was in an excellent position to benefit from these new funding sources.

The discussions that took place at the Summit resulted in plenty of valuable information and innovative ideas. This material will be the basis for a meeting that will take place with the FGTF Board and leaders from FDOT’s Office of Policy Planning in early June to work on the plan for next steps. And tied into this, FDOT will be posting all the Summit’s presentations on their TRANSPLEX website.

FGTF and FDOT are grateful to the Volusia County Government and the sponsors who made the Summit possible. Sponsors included the American Society of Landscape Architects/Florida Chapter, HDR, HALFF, Kimley-Horn, MetroPlan Orlando, the Florida Transportation Builders Association, Sunbridge and Smart Outdoor.

For more information and to partner with us, please visit www.NaplesPathways.org or contact Michelle@NaplesPathways.org
Upcoming Bicycle CAAM Events in Florida

**JULY**

July 9 (Gravel ride) & 10 (Road ride) Punta Gorda
Starts at Beef ’O’ Brady's, 1105 Taylor St., Punta Gorda
38-mile gravel ride on Saturday, 15, 31, 50 and 61 road mile options on Sunday
https://wheelsandwings.raceroster.com/

**AUGUST**

August 27 (Sat) Fleming Island
Starts at Hibernia Baptist Church, 7100 US 17, Fleming Island. 26, 42, 58 mile options.
https:// rotationbikeride.raceroster.com/

**SEPTEMBER**

September 11 (Sun) Fernandina Beach
Endless Summer Watermelon Ride (unconfirmed). Starts at Fernandina Beach Recreation, 2500 Atlantic Ave, Fernandina Beach. 21, 31, 53, 77, 104 mile options.
https://eswr.raceroster.com/

September 17 (Sat) Winter Garden
Tour de Garden
Starts at Veterans Memorial Park, 420 S Park Ave, Winter Garden. 10, 36, 66 mile options.
https://touredegarden.raceroster.com/

**OCTOBER**

October 2 (Sun) Inverness
Rails to Trails Bike Ride (unconfirmed)
Starts at 315 N Appoake Ave, Inverness. 62, 100 mile options. https://www.fotwst.org/

October 8 (Sat) Ormond Beach
Sea-2-Key Double Century
Starts at Andy Romano Beachfront Park, 839 S Atlantic Ave, Ormond Beach.
https://sea2key.raceroster.com/

October 23 (Sun) Cocoa
Intracoastal Waterway Century
Starts at City of Cocoa Civic Center, 430 Delannoy Ave, Cocoa. 14, 28, 65, 102 mile options.
https://iccw.raceroster.com/

October 29 (Sat) Lake Mary
Champions Ride for Charities
Starts at Jeunesse Global, 701 International Pkwy, Lake Mary. 8, 38, 52, 69, 104 mile options.
https://championsrideforcharities.raceroster.com/

This printed version is ABRIDGED from promotional material provided by tour organizers. We’re not responsible for accuracy of information or quality of these rides. Use the contact information for more details about each ride.

---

**Ascending The Mountain**

(continued from page 12)

never really said much. That was probably a good thing.” Laughed Peña. “The fact that I made that decision, and knew I was going to be ok, spoke volumes on how much I had grown.”

It wasn’t until 2020 that Peña made her first attempt at mountain biking. “It was 2020, at the peak of CO-VID and my ex-boyfriend and I decided to get a couple mountain bikes as an activity to partake in on the weekends.” Stated Crystal. “When we split, I decided to continue in the sport.”

Peña soon found a local group that met at a local trail every Tuesday evening and started joining them on rides. They showed her around other trails in the area, gave her some tips on the proper equipment and gear to use and helped her improve her MTB skills.

“I remember being asked if I would be interested in racing and it was a hard NO!” Crystal stated. Shortly thereafter, Peña was talked into entering an Extreme Sports Production (ESP) gravel race and that was all she needed. She caught the bug.

After winning the gravel race, it ignited a fire inside her. She ended up using, and eventually purchasing, a friends road bike and entered the ESP timing criterium series at Okeechobee Park. “I did fairly well, I was finishing mid-pack.” Said Peña.

Peña decided to hire a coach and was talked into entering the 2021 XC Mountain Bike Florida State Championship series, consisting of 8 races spread throughout various trails in the State of Florida. “I felt very uneasy as I had only been mountain biking for a very short time.” Said Crystal.

Peña tackled each race one by one, progressively getting faster each race. December 2021 she was crowned Cat. 2 Florida State Champion her first-year racing!

Peña has since upgraded to Cat 1 and is now competing in the Go Nuts Racing Southeast Regional series, consisting of 11 races scattered throughout the Southeast United States, and is currently sitting pretty in 1st place! She also plans on competing in the 2022 Florida State Championship series that begins in September.

“I plan on taking this all the way to the top.” Stated Peña. “When I commit to something, I am all in. I pour my heart, body and soul into it and there are very few things that can stop me.”

You can visit Peña’s website at www.TheCrystalPena.com. There you will find links to her social media platforms, her upcoming races, sponsors and more information about her. You can also contact her team directly for any media, appearance, or partnership inquiries. Be sure to follow Peña’s ascent of the mountain!
FDOT Districts

**District 1**
Cities: Bradenton, Fort Myers, Naples, Sarasota
Counties: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okaloosa, Polk, Sarasota
FDOT Bike/Ped coordinator: Deborah Chesna, 863-519-2562; Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Mengya (Amy) An, 863-519-2510; SUN Trail Coordinator: Deborah Chesna, 863-519-2562
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club, Highlands Pedalers Bicycle Club, Peace River Riders Bicycle Club, Sanibel Bicycle Club, Sarasota-Manatee Bicycle Club, Gulf Coast Velo, Bonita Bay Bicycle Club, Coastal Cruisers Bicycle Club, Naples Velo, Village Idiots Cycling Club

**District 2**
Cities: Gainesville, Jacksonville, Lake City, St. Augustine
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Derek Dixon, 904-360-5653; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Annely Karron, 904-360-5554; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Olen Petts, 850-330-1543
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Gainesville Cycling Club, North Florida Bicycle Club

**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: Zeke Hayes, 850-330-1487; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Michael Lewis (Interim), 850-330-1266; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Maria Showalter, 850-330-1550
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Capital City Cyclists, Emerald Coast Cyclists, Bike Pensacola
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: The Great Bike Shop

**District 4**
Cities: Fort Lauderdale, Fort Pierce, Palm Beach, Stuart, Vero Beach
Counties: Broward, Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, St. Lucie
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Larry Wallace, 954-777-4208; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Veronica Alteve, 954-777-4616; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Wibel Hay, 954-777-4573
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

**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, 386-943-5734; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Yvonne Braston, 386-943-5335; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Paul Schoedel, 386-943-5246
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Florida Freewheelers, Sumter Landing Bicycle Club, Spacecoast Freewheelers Bicycle Club, Ocala Mountain Bike Association (OMBA), SORBA Orlando, Seminole Cyclists Cycling Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Village Cycles, Orange Cycle, The Ride Xperience, Fox Firestone Bicycle Shop

**District 6**
Cities: Key West, Miami
Counties: Miami-Dade, Monroe
FDOT Bike/Ped Coordinator: Tiffany Gehrie, 305-470-5308; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Shereen Yee Peng (Interim), 305-470-5393; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Kenneth Jeffries, 305-470-5445
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Everglades Bicycle Club, Key West Bike 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: Jensen Hackett, 813-975-6283; FDOT Bike/Ped Safety Specialist: Ginger Regalado, 813-975-6970; FDOT SUN Trail Coordinator: Suzanne Monk, 813-975-6721
FBA Member Bicycle Clubs: Florida Panthers Tandem Club, St. Petersberg Bicycle Club, Suncoast Cycling Club, Swamp Mountain Bike Club
FBA Member Bicycle Shops: Chainwheel Drive (Clearwater, Palm Harbor)

---

HAVE YOU BEEN INJURED WHILE CYCLING?
(If you have, that’s why I’ll fight so hard for you.)

Chris Burns is not your typical personal injury attorney. As an avid rider, he combines his experience on the road and in the courtroom to provide unique insight and expertise. His representation provides cyclists across Florida with the representation they deserve.

Your race for compensation begins here.

904-632-2424

---

25th Anniversary Membership Drive

We want everyone to celebrate with us, especially our current members. And if you get four of your friends to join FBA as new members, we’ll send you a special FBA Buff.

Look on our website for the 25th Anniversary page for more details and a link to the form. Let’s get this party started!
SHARE for SAFETY
2022 marks our 25th Anniversary -
time to celebrate!
FBA members in good-standing can score a pair of socks during our “Share for SAFETY” campaign. Take one of our online Bicycle Safety Quizzes, take a selfie with your Gold Certificate, send to FBA and FBA will send you a pair of our special edition 25th Anniversary FBA SockGuy socks! Email your selfies (and blue or yellow sock color preference) to becky@floridabicycle.org (photos may be used for future social media campaigns).

While supplies last!

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.

18-PR-0975B

In times like these are you feeling NURTURED OR NEGLECTED?

YOU CAN COUNT ON US FOR INSIGHTS AND BUSINESS SOLUTIONS TO FOSTER YOUR SUCCESS.

Grennan Fender, LLP has been a leading Orlando CPA and business financial solutions firm for more than 40 years.
We provide a wide array of innovative services including tax, audit, consulting, outsourced accounting, cloud accounting and tax planning to meet both individual and business needs to help businesses reach their profitability and exit objectives.
(407) 579-5700
www.OrlandoAccounting.com

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

Discover a different side of Florida on our many pristine trails as they wind through friendly, vibrant communities along the majestic St. Johns River and through our abundant and beautiful parks. You’ll definitely experience miles of smiles.

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