Putnam trail advocates give birth to a ‘CSO’

by Linda Crider

It was many years ago that Kraig McLane and some Putnam County officials went to Tallahassee and met with the staff of the State Office of Greenways and Trails to talk about a trail from Lake Butler to St. Augustine, using the old abandoned railroad corridor along St. Rd. 100 and St. Rd. 207.

Did they know then that this 100 miles would become a regionally significant “rails-to-trails” that Florida DOT and DEP would work hard to make happen? And, that now, in fact, it’s becoming a reality.

FBA legislative update

by Tim Bustos, ED

Although the Florida Legislature didn’t convene until March 4, FBA staff has been hard at work in Tallahassee since January working on our legislative initiatives.

Among other things, we’ve been heavily involved in senate and house subcommittee hearings lending support to our legislative agenda and ensuring everything stays on track.

We’ve had one-on-one meetings with legislators, and we’ve testified on bills.
Cycling injuries and our legal system

by Christopher Burns, Esq.

Question: I have really gotten into bicycling. I used to be a runner, but kept hurting my knees and my foot arches. I find cycling to be easier on my body. But I have wondered, what risks do I now have with cycling? What are the most common cycling injuries?

Answer: Cycling is usually filled with joy. But it is possible that you might suffer injuries in a crash.

As a cycling attorney I have seen bicycle riders suffer catastrophic and severe injuries from the neglect, recklessness and failure to follow traffic laws by motorists.

These injuries not only can change how their bodies function, but also change the quality of their lives.

As a fellow cyclist I feel we should all take the time to advocate for improvement of roads, education of drivers and cyclists and law enforcement and for the equality of cyclists with motorists.

We can make changes to dramatically improve the safety of cycling.

Head injuries the most common

Unfortunately, the number of cycling injuries is not minimal. Head injuries are one of the most common and one of the most concerning.

According to the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, bicycle crashes were responsible for 86,000 head injuries treated in emergency rooms in 2009. Football was much less responsible for head injuries: 47,000. Baseball accounted for 38,394. 2012 statistics suggest 79% of Florida cycling fatalities occurred with the cyclist not wearing a bicycle helmet.

According to a five-year study in New York, orthopedic injuries were the most common (almost 60%), with leg/ankle/foot fractures being the majority.

Neurologic injuries (mostly head injuries) totaled almost 36% of injuries.

A study in Australia reached a different result. There the most frequently sustained bicycling injuries were head injuries (25%), open wounds (22%), upper limb fractures (21%), bruises and abrasions (14%) and lower limb fractures (10%).

But what about the other bicycle injuries — those that don’t require a trip to the hospital? Most involve abrasions (“road rash”), contusions and lacerations.

Road rash can often cause a condition called, “traumatic tattooing,” which is permanent scarring that appears as raised abnormal skin, or discolored skin.

Accidental or traumatic tattoos are caused by the forceful penetration of the skin with particles of foreign matter. The skin heals over and around the foreign object. Now the cyclist may actually carry around pencil lead, dirt, sand, grease, paint, grass, metal, wood and asphalt within his or her skin. Car, motorcycle and bicycle accident victims commonly have these kind of tattoos.

It is interesting that at least one study published in American Family Physician concluded that off-road riding (mountain biking) seemed to result in fewer injuries than road cycling.

This may surprise many bicycling readers, as some mountain biking courses have a very high degree of difficult and potential for crashes.

But this study found that off-road cyclists have a 40 percent lower incidence of head, facial and dental injuries than on-road bicyclists, primarily the result of being separated from vehicular traffic and more frequent helmet use.

The law and bicycle injuries

By law, cyclists are entitled to recover compensation when they suffer permanent scarring. Such scarring can be physically painful, itchy, or susceptible to sunburn.

Having their physical appearance become “different” than normal can profoundly impact the victim. Victims of disfigurement, including cyclists, can suffer from self-consciousness, anxiety, depression, and lack of self-esteem. This can be true regardless of whether others comment on their scarring.

Our legal system protects cyclists who have been injured through the fault of a motorist, the manufacturer of a dangerous bike component, or the someone responsible to properly maintain streets and roads for cycling use.

The Civil Justice System protects cyclists through awarding them money to compensate for their injuries. This is true whether the money can be used to heal or cure the injury, reduce the pain of the injury or compensate the cyclist rider for the disfunction and pain that cannot be taken away by modern medicine.

In Florida a set of “Jury Instructions” advises the jury what damages to award a bicyclist victim. The instructions ask the jury to consider past medical expenses, future medical expenses, past lost wages and future loss of earning capacity, past pain and suffering and future pain and suffering.

The jury must consider the cyclist’s loss of enjoyment of life, disfigurement (scarring), mental anguish and even the cyclist’s spouse’s losses as a result of the injury.

It is within this Civil Justice System that I have dedicated my professional career for the protection of cyclists’ rights.

— Chris Burns has been a practicing attorney for 29 years. He has received the highest possible lawyer rating by Martindale-Hubbell for at least the past 14 years. This distinction recognizes Legal Ability and Ethical Standards earned through strenuous review by his peers.

He has also been selected as a “Florida Super Lawyer” in 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. To be classified as a “Florida Super Lawyer” one must be considered in the top 5% of the lawyers in Florida.

He is a board member of FBA, a member of the North Florida Bicycle Club and the League of American Bicyclists and sponsors the Jacksonville Racing Club, Velobrew Cycling Club and the University of Florida Cycling Team.

He currently is Chairman of the Jacksonville Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee.
Spring welcomes new Board and new strategic plan

Jodi Hohlstein

Well, it’s almost spring here in beautiful Florida and we are so much luckier than our friends up north who have several more weeks of winter ahead of them, and who can’t cycle in the climates we are able to enjoy.

Where has the winter gone? For your newly elected FBA Board a lot of hard work and assignments have been undertaken in this short time frame.

We have big shoes to fill and we are doing our best to make strides to do that. Early in January we held a special Board meeting where the Board met with Marilyn Donnellan, a not-for-profit management consultant, who helped lead us through a day-long process of assessing where FBA is and where we want to be at the end of 2014 and even 2015.

It was a long day but we came out at the end of that session with the basics of a strategic plan for the year to come and beyond. And now we DO have a “strategic plan” to move forward with.

The Board has decided to take a more active role in the direction FBA is heading and we have formed several committees to get us from point ‘A’ to point ‘B’.

First of all, we have Chris Burns and Earl Lang reviewing our mission statement and the FBA vision to make sure they truly reflect the goals of FBA and needs of its members.

We have the Administrative/Board and Volunteer Development committee headed by Jeff Hohlstein, which will review, update and revise policies & procedures and improve internal communication processes with FBA membership.

Earl Lang is heading the Marketing and Resource Development Committee to make sure FBA’s message is consistent and reaching our target audiences as well as maximizing our membership growth potential.

Additionally, we have our Programs and Community Involvement committee headed by John Egberts, which is going to explore the needs and desires of our current customer base—you—and improve our educational programs to maximize our message and goals to draw new members to the association.

What I have outlined here is a big order! Your Board has committed to deliver it. If any member desires to serve on these committees please contact me. Your help will be more than welcome.

Enjoy your spring and I hope to see you on a ride soon!

We thank you all for your continued support! It is appreciated!

President’s message...

The mission of the Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) is to advocate and educate for excellence in bicycling in Florida. Its vision is a Florida wherein bicyclists are safe, respected, and encouraged to cycle for transportation and recreation.

The Florida Bicycle Association was incorporated in 1997 for educational and charitable purposes. FBA is a nonprofit, 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, P.O. Box 916715, Longwood, Florida 32791.

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

The Florida Bicycle Association Messenger is published quarterly as a service to members and advocates for a bicycle-friendly Florida by the Florida Bicycle Association, P.O. Box 916715, Longwood, FL 32791.

www.floridabicycle.org; e-mail: tim@floridabicycle.org; Phone: 850-238-5238

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Membership update

by Dan Moser, Program Director, Membership Manager

It has been a full year since FBA switched our membership payment and management system to ClubExpress so it’s a good time to talk about how it’s being received by you, our members, and if it’s any better than our former system.

Our number of memberships remain just over 1,200, about the same as late 2012 before we made the switch, so not much has changed there.

And although the vast majority of those who sought to renew or sign up as a new member were able to do so without problems, some complained that it was too complicated or otherwise ran into a problem that they were not able to resolve.

For anyone who experiences such obstacles we offer other choices. Simply e-mail me at dan@floridabicycle.org or call 239-334-6417 to discuss your situation.

To visit your profile pages to update, change, or renew membership, please go to fbamembership.org, sign-in with your username and password and navigate to your profile and the other available sections of the site that are for members only.

If you forgot your username, password, or both, contact me and I’ll have a password reset sent.

From the management end, we’re still learning about all the features and services that are available to us, including those that will allow us to better communicate with you, one of the key benefits of ClubExpress.

You’ll soon receive updates and alerts about important matters that affect cyclists throughout the state or in your specific area.

Since our state legislature is in session this time of year, we’ll do our best to keep you informed, seek your input and sometimes even ask you to weigh in with your elected officials on matters that may be helpful or harmful to the cycling environment in Florida.

Finally, I’d like to apologize to those of you who may have been put off by the e-mail renewal reminders that were generated by ClubExpress in the first half of 2013. Once it was brought to our attention that the generic content came across more like demand letters we found out how to edit them so they were truly our words with the message that we value your support and would appreciate it if it were to continue.

Any time you have an issue, comment, suggestion or complaint, we’re here to listen and respond.

Southwest Florida happenings

BikeWalkLee, which advocates for pedestrian and bicycle issues in Lee County, has named two southwest Florida cities and their local advocacy groups as its 2013 “Complete Streets Champions” for their work in promoting streets that safely accommodate all users.

BWL honored Cape Coral and Cape Coral Bike-Ped for their innovative public/private partnership to create a safe and connected system of more than 90 miles of cycling routes within Cape Coral, Florida’s second largest city in terms of square miles (over 110).

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we didn't get the winter that our cycling friends got in the Northeast or the Midwest, but still, it's good to get back in the swing of things.

The days are getting a little longer, we have more time to ride and I don't have to wear my arm warmers every time I get on my bike.

Let's face it, every day is a good day to ride, but springtime cycling in Florida is awesome!

Although we couldn't ride every day throughout the winter here at FBA, we've been very busy. As long time Board members have been circulating off the Board, replaced by new Board members, we thought it would be a good time to take stock of what we've been doing, and what we need to be doing.

And since we've added 4-5 new Board members over the last 6 months or so, we decided it would be a good time to go through a strategic planning process.

At our quarterly Board meeting in November, the FBA Board decided to seek out the services of a third party professional to help us wind our way through the process of strategic planning.

We felt it was necessary to have someone who was not on the Board, and who was not FBA staff, because we wanted an objective perspective, and we wanted someone with specific experience working with non-profit Boards.

After some searching on the part of your Executive Director, we were very fortunate to locate a firm called “Nonprofit Management Services,” and they did a phenomenal job!

Another big change is that, given that we really do have a lean, yet highly effective staff (your ED is the only full time staff member), your Board of Directors has agreed to roll up their sleeves and get more involved.

Each Board member is now working on an active committee covering administration, membership, marketing, etc., and we've set deadlines to accomplish tasks.

It's also important to point out that two stars have emerged from this effort: Jodi Hohlstein, our new Board President, and Jeff Hohlstein, the new Board Secretary.

Already, they have devoted countless hours volunteering to be sure the strategic planning effort is not just an academic exercise, and that it has positive lasting effects.

It's also important to point out that this is not an isolated, one-time effort. Our strategic planning exercise will be a continuous and cooperative effort among our Board, our members, and our partners throughout the state as we strive to make Florida the safest and most enjoyable state in the country to ride a bike in.

Stay tuned in the coming months as our plans progress!

Three bills get FBA attention during 2014 legislative session

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but mostly, we've been getting a lot of support already.

Among other things, we are tracking various anti-texting bills windng their way through the legislature.

This comes on the heels of last years first ever anti-texting bill in Florida, but from the beginning, most backers felt it wasn't strong enough (it is presently only a secondary offense, and consequently, nearly unenforceable).

As a result, there are new efforts to strengthen the language, because texting while driving is one of the most dangerous new threats to traffic safety for all road users.

Aside from texting legislation, FBA's top two legislative efforts for 2014 are the "Coast to Coast Connector" and the "Aaron Cohen Life Protection Act"

Coast to Coast Connector

As many of you know, the Coast to Connector is a proposed separated bike path that will run from the Gulf of Mexico in Pinellas County to the Atlantic Ocean in Brevard County for a distance of approximately 275 miles.

The amazing part is that most of it is already in place!

Of the total distance involved, only about 72 miles remains to be built; so this is why this project is part of a larger effort referred to as "closing the gaps."

The estimated cost of what remains to be built is about $42 million. Seems like a lot, but those who work in the field of transportation know that in "transportation dollars" it isn't as much as it sounds.

To put it into perspective, $42 million is just about what it would cost to build one mile of a six-lane freeway in a city like Tampa or Orlando (including right-of-way acquisition, drainage, construction, labor, etc.).

Additionally, it has been proven that bicycle and pedestrian projects like this tend to generate more jobs than freeway projects, because they are more labor intensive and require less space and fewer raw materials.

And the economic return for the State of Florida is potentially huge.

A study by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council in 2010 indicated that three Central Florida trails alone generated approximately $42 million from job creation, hotels, restaurants, bike shop support etc., so this is a win/win situation.

This project went before the Florida legislature last year, and passed in both houses, but was vetoed by Governor Scott due to some misunderstandings about how the project would be funded.

However, this project has good momentum this year and now seems to have the Governor's approval. We remain "cautiously optimistic."

Aaron Cohen Life Protection Act"

(SB 102/HB 183, Sponorred by Senator Diaz de la Portilla, Coral Gables, and Representative Bryan Nelson, Apopka, with heavy support from Senator Evers, Pensacola).

This is also smoothly sailing through the legislature (so far), having gone through the Senate Transportation, and the Criminal Justice subcommittees unopposed.

We scored a major coup when we picked up the endorsement of Attorney General Pam Bondi, the Florida Police Chiefs' Association and the Florida Sheriffs' Association.

Unfortunately, Florida has an inordinately high percentage of bicycle and pedestrian crashes that are "hit and run crashes" (also known as "leaving the scene") and frequently involve alcohol.

For reasons that are still unclear, the penalties for leaving the scene are minimal.

This bill hopes to address these issues in two ways:

1. It will remove the disparity between the stiff penalty for DUI, and the meager (and almost insignificant) penalty for hit and run crashes, thereby creating a disincentive for leaving the scene of the crash.

2. This will save lives, because there is now more of an incentive to stay and render aid to crash victims and call 911.

And please, as FBA members and supporters, contact your representatives in Tallahassee today and tell them you support these two important bills!

Your phone calls, e-mails, and letters can and will make a difference.

Thank you.
Membership update
continued from page 4

The City of Sanibel and the Sanibel Bicycle Club were recognized for the years of work that has resulted in a very walkable and bikeable community. It’s no wonder that Sanibel Island is one of our state’s most visited places, attracting many families because of its extensive pathway network and commitment to protecting the environment.

In both cases, strong partnerships between the respective municipal governments and their bicycle (and pedestrian) advocates are the key to their success. Congratulations to both!

Friends of Legacy Trail
Earlier this year I made a presentation to the Friends of Legacy Trail (legacytrail-friends.org), updating them on FBAs efforts as well as covering rules of the road and pathway.

The Legacy Trail is an excellent example of a well-designed rail-to-trail project and connects Venice to Sarasota. Like many similar facilities around the state and country, there’s potential for expansion.

To that end, last August Sarasota County Commissioners authorized its task force wants to make sure that in May when SunRail trains from DeBary relieve Orlando-bound I-4 car traffic, that they also reduce car traffic going the other way.

That’s by carrying cyclists from metro Orlando to Florida’s popular northeast touring region.

Cyclists will newly be able to put their bikes free on trains along the 32-mile SunRail system, roll off in DeBary, and tour for weekends and longer without need for a car.

It’s the next step for advancing Florida bike culture. Other task force interests include MetroPlan Orlando, the Volusia County TPO, Bike Florida, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, the DeLand Area Chamber of Commerce, Southwest Volusia Ecotourism Working Group and Orange Cycle.

Cycling and trails have come a long way. Look at the on-road and off-road facilities and safety training programs like FBAs Cycling Savvy. Police ride bikes. Buses carry bikes free and, since the 1980s, so have commuter trains in South Florida.

Now trains will connect downtowns with small towns and a rural region that’s comfortable for skilled on-road riders and increasingly popular with cyclists more comfortable touring with groups and with support vehicles.

A short spur trail will connect DeBary Station with the 260-mile St. Johns River to-Sea Loop now nearly 100 miles paved, off-road, in construction or funded.

Sanibel Bicycle Club, celebrated its 20th anniversary recently with a major bash that included this decadent-looking cupcake...cake, guaranteed to be worth a few trips ‘round the island’s extensive pathway system.

Just so everyone understands that advocacy isn’t all work and no play, one of Florida’s most effective and fun-loving bicycle organizations, Sanibel Bicycle Club, celebrated its 20th anniversary recently with a major bash.

It seems like they’ve actually been around much longer, considering the progress the island has made in accommodating cyclists and other non-motorists on its extensive pathway system.

Among the many in attendance were a number of the forefathers and foremothers of what can be considered a model bike club that also serves as advocates and advisors to the government.

SBC serves as a powerful influence in shaping its community by being involved, being heard, and putting its money where its mouth is. Sanibel Island is a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community thanks to SBC’s cooperation with and support of City planning and policy initiatives, including sharing the cost to develop a bike/pedestrian master plan as well as raising the funds necessary to build a welcome kiosk and rest area for pathway users.

public works department to spend $75,000 on an initial study of the northern extension of the trail.

The County will is seeking non-public funds for study costs above $75,000, which are estimated to be as high as $150,000.

The Friends of Legacy Trail and Sarasota businessman Jesse Biter have offered to rally citizen and business support. A $5,000 grant from the Sarasota Community Foundation was approved, but more funds still need to be raised.

Among the sources of the needed money are the profits from the Friends of Legacy Trail’s 2014 Tour de Parks bicycle event, an annual ride staged from the historic train depot in downtown Venice and that takes cyclists north on the trail to Sarasota and back.

The shorter rides stay on the trail and the longer ones add plenty of road miles.

A number of parks are among the attractions cyclists experience on the ride, one of the primary benefits of this excellent facility and of Sarasota County in general.

Trains and trails advance Florida bicycling culture
by Herb Hiller, Chair, East Coast Greenway Alliance Task Force

“I like the idea of connecting ‘Old Florida to New Florida,’ says regional planning council planner PJ Smith.

“Old Florida’ would be the countryside, orange groves, oaks, etc. that our trails run through. ‘New Florida’ would be the sustainability of connecting urban systems via rail (and saving green spaces).”

Says Jerry Mayes, City of Deltona business development administrator and chair of the ecotourism working group, trail use has to “convert to a local economic development resource by showing a return on investment. This ROI has become paramount to funding sources.”

The start of SunRail service in May promises what Jerry calls for.

Cyclists will be able to board SunRail trains at any of 11 stations between Sand Lake Road in Orlando and Sanford. They’ll be able to use Bike Florida maps and cue sheets for touring the Loop.

A new website of the Greenway Alliance for Florida will let cyclists blog about their tours and comment on places along the route to stay, eat and pick up on local culture.

If there’s a hitch in prospect, it’s that SunRail will initially operate service only Monday through Friday. That means that cyclists who ride the train for weekend touring will have to come up Friday and head home Monday.

Weekend tours will have to be Friday-to-Friday or similar weekend-avoiding schedules.

Is this going to be a problem? Ask Orange Cycle owner Deena Breed. Says Deena, “Just give me two months to start marketing.”

Share the Road Mini Grants available

Bike Florida and Share the Road invite your organization to apply for a Share the Road Mini Grant.

Through the sale of “Share the Road” specialty license plates, and sponsoring partners like BILL BONE BIKE LAW, Bike Florida and Share the Road can make these funds available to cycling organizations, city or county governments and school parent teacher organizations (PTOs) or just about anyone actively promoting safe cycling or cyclist and driver education.

Some of the most common awards fund new bicycle purchases or repairs for organizations administering education programs, especially those teaching the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program.

We have also funded requests to purchase Share the Road signage in communities around the state.

If your Safe Routes to School program needs event funding, we might be able to help! Infrastructure projects may also fit the funding parameters.

$q 2,000.00 maximum

$q Applications accepted from Non-Profit Organizations and Government Agencies

$q Applications received continuously, grants awarded quarterly

Visit ShareTheRoad.org for an Application and Terms of use.

Share the Road welcomes BILL BONE BIKE LAW as our newest Mini Grant sponsor.

Like Bike Florida and Share the Road, BILL BONE BIKE LAW is dedicated to the bicycle safety message.

It is rare to see an organization with this much passion for cycling.
Palatka, the “town in the middle,” began to see itself as a “hub” for trails. The “St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop,” the brainchild of Herb Hiller, then a Putnam County resident and nationally recognized trails advocate, secured the support of the five counties the “Loop” would traverse, totaling 260 miles.

Each of the five counties are now proceeding with their sections as money becomes available. Volusia County already has much of its “Springs to Springs” loop in place.

A plan for “Blueways” (canoeing and kayaking trails) gave Putnam County a Statewide recognition with the St. Johns River receiving a State Blueways designation.

The Cross Florida Greenway extends from Palatka southwest to end up in the Gulf Mexico and consists of hiking, mountain biking, trail cycling and canoeing/kayaking trails.

BIKE FLORIDA came to Putnam County for its annual 2006 spring event (It’s coming again this spring 2014) with a thousand bicyclists enjoying Ravine Gardens, historic homes and murals of Palatka, downtown and riverfront dining and east and west Palatka country roads.

Bike Florida was there for four days at the beginning, middle and end of the weeklong bicycle adventure.

From that tour, many local businesses realized the economic impact that bicycle touring could make and they began growing enthusiasm for trails coming to Putnam County.

I was part of that enthusiasm when I saw the trail “hub” potential and realized I could live right in the middle of it.

So I sold my home in Gainesville, retired from 18 years in Urban Planning at the University of Florida and bought a home in the South Historic District right near the “mighty” St. Johns River.

I worked for two years with Herb and Bike Florida in developing the St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop bicycle bed & breakfast tours.

For Christmas my children bought me a kayak so I started enjoying the river by boat.

As recipient of the National Rails-to-Trails “Trail Champion” award in 2011, I was given $1,000 to donate to the trail of my choosing and without hesitation I said the Lake Butler to St. Augustine trail with emphasis on using the money to start a CSO (Citizens Support Organization) for the trails of Putnam County.

The Putnam Blueways and Trails CSO is now two years old and continues growing a list of volunteers who work with the Putnam County Parks & Recreation staff, who agreed to shepherd the fledgling organization.

The Trails Citizens Support Organization has hosted numerous events with many more planned.

A monthly full moon paddle (kayak and canoe) is part of the “Blueways” events and there are monthly bicycle and hiking events along with the start of an annual Palatka Bicycle Festival in the spring.

This year’s festival will link to Bike Florida’s annual spring tour and 20th year anniversary celebration (March 22-28, 2014).

Other Putnam Blueways and Trails CSO-sponsored events include Grandini’s Tangled Oaks Winery “Bike & Wine tasting,” an annual Valentines Day bicycle ride through Palatka’s North and South Historic districts and the riverfront, Bike Ravine Gardens or along the Lake Butler to Palatka trail to favorite picnic spots or local restaurants for dinner.

These monthly “Bike to Eat” rides, welcome riders from surrounding counties.

The Florida Trail Association plans hikes and trail maintenance days on the Putnam stretch of this statewide hiking trail that runs through the western edge of Putnam County near the Etoniah Creek.

In February the 100-mile “IronHorse” running event took place along the State Road 100 trail with runners from all over the world.

Numerous equestrian events are also part of the CSO calendar posted on the Putnam County Parks & Rec. Website or on www.putnambluewaysandtrails.org.

Recently completed is the new “Palatka Urban Section” of the Lake Butler to St. Augustine Rails-to-Trails” going through the north side of downtown Palatka and across the St. Johns River with a reconstructed separated pathway on the north side of the bridge.

This is a major connector for bicyclists traveling on the TransAmerica cross-country bicycle route from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean.

We are hoping to attract not only individual trail users to Putnam County and Palatka, but also groups, tours, events and races as part of a St. Johns River adventure.

Our trail “hub with spokes” provides a menu of blueway and greenway trails for kayaking, cycling, walking, sight-seeing and our soon to be new water taxi which will be able to take cyclists, kayakers and campers to Murphy’s Island, Dunns Creek State Park, Welaka and other points of interest.

A William Bartram initiative includes river kayaking and overland bicycling tours to interpret the early travels of this historic figure naturalist/artist who traveled this river in the late 1700s recording the flora and fauna and lifestyle of the natives.

Already a “Bartram Century” bicycle ride is gaining popularity taking riders along Bartram’s overland route from Palatka to Paynes Prairie near Gainesville and back 99.9 miles.

The seeds were planted for Putnam County’s ecotourism and trails initiatives and they are sprouting and growing fast.

Thank you again to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for the $1,000 seed money “Trail Champion Award” that got us on our way. I think you will agree it was money well spent!
River of Grass Greenway could become a sliver of Everglades experience
by Maureen Bonness

I love the Everglades. As an adventurist, it is my playground; as a botanist, it is my workspace. I’d like to share the experience of slow-paced travel through our magnificent, preserved lands that are the heart of southern Florida.

More precisely, I’d like to someday share a sliver of the Everglades, along US 41, on the River of Grass Greenway (ROGG), a proposed 75-mile multi-use pathway between Naples and Miami. South of Lake Okeechobee, only two roads go across the state. One is a restricted interstate highway, so that leaves cyclists with one and only one choice: US 41.

This two-lane high-speed highway also provides the only access to many popular Everglades destinations, such as Shark Valley, the Fakahatchee boardwalk, airboat ride concessions, trailheads of the Florida National Scenic Trail and both visitor centers of Big Cypress National Preserve. Current traffic conditions are seriously unfriendly to cyclists or even to motorists stepping out of their vehicles for wildlife viewing.

The vision for ROGG is to provide a safe alternative for the self-propelled to experience the Everglades and to travel across the state.

A coast-to-coast trail user would encounter a national park, a national preserve, a national wildlife refuge, a state wildlife management area, a state water conservation area, a state forest and two state parks.

Furthermore, we are studying shuttle service options that may allow trail users to arrive at ROGG trailheads without using a personal motor vehicle.

It’s a sweet vision. As happens with all pathways, the magnitude of the challenge gets exposed during planning stages.

That’s the stage where we’re at today.

The ROGG has been bestowed with several grants for studies to determine feasibility, create a master plan and follow through with detailed environmental and development studies.

Grants include technical assistance from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation

Continued on page 9

New Board members appointed

Steele Olmstead from Tampa and Tim Bol from Orlando, have joined FBA’s Board of Directors.

We’ll have some background information on Tim Bol next issue; here are some details about Steele Olmstead.

Steele’s family has been in bicycling in a big way since 1971. But long before that, Steele started cycling at age four on a solid rubber wheel bicycle.

His Air Force major father, despite moving the family multiple times, always provided the kids with bicycles at every Air Force base. Bicycles were Steele’s one constant in life besides his family.

In 1971, Steele’s cousin Tom Steele Godwin started The Great Bicycle Shop in Tallahassee. This is where Steele got his first job as a bike mechanic. In that position he learned from the students and state workers who frequented the college town shop how it was to cycle as a lifestyle.

Steele’s brother Jim Olmstead took it over in 1975 and Steele worked there through college and before law school and commuted by bicycle to school. During law school, he commuted on bicycle. After graduation from law school, Steele’s brother would occasionally call him about a bicycle issue or to help an injured customer.

That’s how he first started practicing bicycle law. He now represents injured cyclists and answers questions from bike shops frequently.

His request to be on the board of Florida Bicycle Association arose from cognitive dissonance he experienced: We have the best environment and weather for cycling in Florida yet two of our cities are the number one and two places for cyclists and pedestrians to be killed.

Steele wants to change that and believes FBA is a vehicle for that change. Steele regularly lectures about bicycling issues to bicyclists, bicycling club and makes appearances in front of governmental bodies to advocate for making bicycling safer in Florida.

He is in a not-for-profit advocacy group in West Central Florida known as SWFBUD. SWFBUD’s motto is “Making the Bay Areas Better for Bicycling.”

Steele lives in New Tampa with his partner, Dr. Pamela Hatley. They had their first date on a bicycle. When their son was born, he was put in a child carrier and spent many of his early days riding behind mom or dad.

In addition to being passionate about human powered vehicles, Steele enjoys public speaking and playing mandolin, guitar and resonator.

He is an FAA licensed pilot, loves sailing and takes a lot of photographs. He is a member of the Florida Justice Association, American Justice Association, Southern Trial Lawyers Association, Hillsborough County Bar, Hernando County Bar, Hernando-Citrus Inns of Court, Rotary and is a certified mediator and arbitrator.

He is admitted to practice in Florida, is admitted to the Mississippi Bar and the U. S. Federal Middle District of Florida.

J. STEELE OLMSTEAD, P.A.
Two-wheeled lawyer

A fellow two-wheeler assisting injured two-wheelers since 1985

State-Wide Practice Liverpool
Free Consultation (of course) and I’ll come to your home, office, favorite trail or bike shop.

800-535-3002 Answered 24/7

Main office: Tampa, Florida, but I fly planes too–I’ll come to you.
River of Grass Greenway

continued

Assistance program (National Parks Service), two Sarbanes Transit-in-Parks grants (Federal Transit Administration), and two Transportation Enhancement Grants (Florida Department of Transportation).

The biggest challenge of constructing the ROGG is the Everglades itself, including the entire package of public conservation concerns, tribal claims, restoration plans and agency regulations for those wondrous wetlands.

While considering potential trail alignments and design options, there is an underlying struggle between enhancing trail user experience (e.g., further separation between trail and highway) and degrees of environmental impact. And then there are the needs for bridges — many small bridges in the western segment and many feet (miles actually) of bridges in the eastern restoration-intensive portion.

Last year, as a component of the Feasibility and Master Plan Study, we provided an extensive platform for public input that included week-long workshops in three locations, as well as a “town hall” website www.riverofgrassgreenway.org that continues to encourage public comment.

Currently, a multitude of agencies are “having their say.” Soon we will be developing an Implementation Plan, then moving on to the Master Plan Report and public presentations.

The most exciting news on ROGG development is that a 2.3 mile segment at the far west end is currently in Design Phase, with expectations that it will roll into construction phase in FDOT fiscal year 2015/16!

Planning for this pathway segment is more mature because it was part of a larger road expansion project of US 41 that segues to urban Naples.

Regional trails are difficult. In addition to coordination between many jurisdictions and many stakeholders, they require buy-in from decision makers at all levels.

The long-term vision and support must survive the whims of each and every election cycle. Since regional trails cross multiple jurisdictions, the concept (and energy and support) of their creation is frequently born by volunteers/organizations other than the major stakeholders or landowners.

For example, staff members of each park within the ROGG corridor could not have proposed this trail because it extends beyond their jurisdiction, and having a pathway solely within their borders makes less sense.

For the ROGG, the impetus was the Naples Pathways Coalition and Patty Huff, a die-hard volunteer and adventure cyclist from Everglades City.

Appropriately, our volunteer citizen support organization is nicknamed the FROGG (Friends of the ROGG).

Regional trails provide pronounced benefits for the economy, for quality of life of nearby residents, for the global environment (promoting "green" mobility) and in this case, for stewardship of natural areas.

I have read many case studies that clearly demonstrate the economic boost due to trails (including generating enough taxes to compensate for trail costs).

And I know tourists and residents have an increasing appetite for nature trails. Due to the nature of ROGG (pun intended), this trail could become a tourism destination upon itself, further augmenting the economic potential for all south Florida.

However, I hold fast to my belief that the greatest benefit of the ROGG will be as a primary source for education about Everglades ecology, as well as providing the option for slow-paced enjoyment of the Everglades without getting your feet wet, which fosters stewardship and makes it into OUR Everglades.

Every spring we host the “Everglades Ride” out of Everglades City to promote the ROGG (this year on April 13). In the future, I envision this event to be transformed into the FROGG-fest, with participants arriving via the ROGG, not just in support of the ROGG.
Ultimately it was a tragedy that brought advocates together in common cause to fight for the right of Sunshine State cyclists to “Share The Road.” Now we are asking you to help us preserve the legacy of those whose deaths and suffering helped spur a Share The Road movement that has endured for nearly two decades.

On Dec. 26, 1996, as six cyclists rode from Gainesville to St. Augustine the driver of a pickup truck ran into their pace line, killing two and seriously injuring the other four.

Dead were Margaret Raynal and Doug Hill, well known in Florida’s cycling community as safe cycling advocates.

Injured were Lauri Triulzi, Jessica Green, Eric Finnan and Charles Hinson.

The negligent driver was not charged with anything more serious than a traffic infraction.

But outrage over the “accident,” and the failure of authorities to hold the driver accountable, mobilized safe cycling advocates throughout the state.

Two enduring developments arose from that terrible tragedy: first, a dormant FBA came back into existence to once again be a forceful advocate for the rights of Florida cyclists.

Second, a successful initiative won Legislative authorization of the Share The Road license tags. Tag sales have since raised millions in support of bicycle safety and education programs.

In the wake of that tragedy, friends of the killed and injured cyclists came together in Gainesville to create a monument in their honor. Six “rammed earth” sculptures—containing the ruined parts of the bicycles they rode—were positioned alongside the rail-trail on Gainesville’s Depot Avenue, and an informational kiosk was erected to preserve the memory of those fallen cyclists.

Today those sculptures suffer from neglect and are all but obscured from view by newly planted landscaping.

The rail-trail has been rerouted. The kiosk has been dismantled, leaving passers-by with no clue as to what the sculptures represent.

As part of our anniversary year we have committed to restoring the sculptures, rebuilding the kiosk and otherwise ensuring that the legacy of those fallen cyclists will be preserved.

Please join Bike Florida on Thursday evening, March 27, at the Fountain of Youth Archeological Park for our 20th anniversary party.

We will celebrate 20 successful years of Florida bicycle touring and formally kick off our fundraising campaign to preserve the legacy of the fallen cyclists. It will be an evening of great food and good music, good fellowship and a time for remembrance: an occasion for Florida cyclists to again come together in common cause.

There will be much to celebrate and much to remember on this special evening under the stars. Go to BikeFlorida.org to register to attend. A minimum donation of $30 will cover the cost of admission, dinner and a contribution to the restoration effort.

If you cannot attend, please consider sending a donation to help us preserve the legacy of these fallen cyclists.

20th Anniversary Party
March 27, 2014
Fountain of Youth Archeological Park
St. Augustine
Do you have a question about the laws related to bicycling?

Ask Geo @ FlBikeLaw.org*

George Martin

Bicycle Lane or Bike Lane – A portion of the roadway which has been designated by striping, signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Adopted by the Florida Department of Transportation)

Bicycle Lane – A portion of the roadway that has been designated for the preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists by pavement markings and, if used, signs.

Pedestrians must use sidewalks when available, or must use the shoulder.

s. 316.130 – Pedestrians; Traffic Regulations

(3) Where sidewalks are provided, no pedestrian shall, unless required by other circumstances, walk along and upon the portion of a roadway paved for vehicular travel.

(4) Where sidewalks are not provided, any pedestrian walking along and upon a highway shall, when practicable, walk only on the shoulder on the left side of the roadway….

Since the designated bike lane is, by Statute, a portion of the roadway, it is not the shoulder. By law, your pre-dawn runner shall be on the sidewalk, or shoulder, not in the bike lane.

Practically speaking, however, many seasoned runners prefer to run in the road and a significant number will run in the same direction as traffic.

Regardless of their illegal practice, and your right to the bike lane, a close encounter puts both of you in danger.

I hope you are riding with lights and with traffic, as required by law. A cordial conversation with the runner—noting their invisible status and suggesting reflective arm bands? a light?—could be a positive experience for both.

No Passing Zones

Kevin asked: Is it legal to pass a bike, with the 3-foot rule, over a double yellow line?

A

This is a common problem, and if motorists couldn’t cross the double yellow line to pass bicyclists in a narrow lane, they could be stuck for very long times in some locations. Even if the cyclist is riding far to the right, motorists cannot legally and safely pass in narrow lanes without at least partially changing lanes.

If there is no oncoming traffic, and if there is no intersection, blind curve or other hazard, the law provides an exception for crossing the double yellow center line to avoid an obstruction.

Is a slow-moving bicyclist an obstruction?

The law takes these circumstances into account and provides a solution, albeit one that is not entirely specific to all cases. The statute that applies is:

s. 316.0875 – No Passing Zones

This section does not apply when an obstruction exists making it necessary to drive to the left of the center of the roadway….

We probably would agree that a stopped garbage truck is an obstruction. Possibly a slow-moving tractor. How about a bicycle? Again, the law isn’t specific, so we need to use some common sense.

As a part of the Bicycle Law Enforcement Program, a web site exists to provide a place to ask questions about the laws. This is a continuing series that addresses some of the questions and provides updates about FBA’s Bicycle Law Enforcement Program.

*DISCLAIMER: The purpose of this column is to inform about bicycling laws. The material provided here and through other means is for general informational purposes only and shall in no way constitute or be construed as legal advice by the officers, directors, agents or employees of the Florida Bicycle Association. If your experience in a court of law or on the streets differs from that presented, we want to know about it, but George Martin and FBA are not accountable for a ruling contrary to our interpretation of Florida Law or other consequences of cycling. You should seek legal advice on a particular situation.

Welcome New/Rejoining Members!

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Smith, Sarah

Phillips, Terrence

St. Joe Velo

Philpin, Anthony

Sussman, Mark

Rodriguez, Lilliam

Villeneuve, Serge

Sanibel Bicycle Club

Toeman, Andrew

Scharp, Bradley

Van Horn, Robert

Schindler, Rose

Wexelbaum, Gerald

Shorette, Robert

White, Richard

Skadowski, Suzanne

Witte, Michellina

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If you are an Adventure Cyclist, check out the adventurecycling.org newsletter, Bike Bits. To subscribe, visit: http://www.adventurecycling.org/bikebits/subscribe.cfm and read their blog at http://blog.adventurecycling.org.

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First Coast Chapter update...

City of Jacksonville hires its first full-time bike/ped coordinator

by Stephen Tocknell

Thanks to pressure from key members of the Jacksonville City Council, including Lori Boyer and long time bicycle advocate Don Redman, the City of Jacksonville has hired its first full-time bicycle pedestrian coordinator.

In her new role, Denise Chaplick will be

- reviewing roadway and land development plans to assure compliance with Jacksonville’s innovative Mobility Plan;
- planning for new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements; and
- working with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through education and enforcement.

Look for a profile of Denise in an upcoming issue of the FBA Messenger.

Cycling Savvy News

On September 13th, Jeff Hohlstein conducted a Cycling Savvy Truth & Techniques of Traffic Cycling workshop for approximately 30 ride leaders of the North Florida Bicycle Club.

NFBC hosted this for its ride leaders free of their cost in the interest of making the club’s rides safer and more enjoyable.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes May Be Leveling Off in Jacksonville

After years of bicycle and pedestrian crash rates in the City of Jacksonville that were bad and getting even worse, a recent report from the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (JSO) offers a glimmer of hope for safer times ahead.

At the September 2013 meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force that was organized pursuant to the Jax2025 community visioning initiative, JSO Assistant Chief Adam Brown reported that from January 1 through August 15, 2013, there were 220 crashes involving pedestrians in Jacksonville, down by 18% from the same period in 2012.

The 20 pedestrian fatalities in that period of 2013 represents a 5% reduction from the same period in 2012.

Twenty percent of those pedestrian fatalities were alcohol related. Most pedestrian crashes were in daylight hours, but there were more pedestrian fatalities at night.

There has also been a noteworthy improvement in the number of bicycle crashes. From January 1 to August 15, 2013, there were 122 reported crashes in Jacksonville that involved bicyclists. That’s a 22% reduction from the same period a year earlier.

But the number of bicycle fatalities was the same for both periods in 2012 and 2013: six.

Most [Jax] bicycle crashes occurred at the end of the workday, but bicycle fatalities peaked between 8:00 PM and 11:00 PM.

(Another ) near tragedy energizes a community

by Dan Moser, Program Director/Membership Manager

“Share the Road” rally was called by Naples Pathway Coalition and Naples Velo to make the point that the declining bike/ped environment in this Southwest Florida community isn’t acceptable.

A number of partners, including FBA, were gathered in the City’s most central part to echo that message, as were leaders from local law enforcement and elected officials.

The challenge that was put forth by Joe Bonness, a world-class cyclist and long-time advocate who also happens to build the very roads the whole community uses, was to drive and behave in the way that’s expected of others when we’re on our bike or on foot.

Joe’s message resonated with the diverse crowd that gathered, many of whom walk, run and cycle and expect to be able to do so enjoyably and safely.

Check NPC’s website for more details about the event and ongoing effort taking place (naplespathways.org).
FBA hosts federal funding workshop

Reading through the myriad nuances of the federal funding sources available for bicycle and pedestrian projects can be challenging for local government, so FBA partnered with the Alliance for Biking and Walking and the League of American Bicyclists in an effort to make it a little easier.

On February 25, we held a workshop in Orlando entitled “Navigating Map-21,” which was graciously hosted by MetroPlan Orlando.

We had a good turnout, with approximately 50 engineers, planners, administrators and advocates from all over the state signing up.

As most of you know, the federal government does have an affinity for acronyms, so MAP-21 actually stands for the “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” and it is a funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending.

This bill was finally passed last year after many delays, so local governments in Florida (and elsewhere) are still trying to determine exactly what it means, and what funding is available.

The day started off well with rousing introductory remarks from MetroPlan Executive Director Harold (Harry) Barley extolling the virtues of an integrated, multimodal transportation system.

Mr. Barley discussed how MetroPlan had successfully leveraged federal funding to help develop bicycle and pedestrian networks throughout the region, as well as a state-of-the-art commuter rail—“Sunrail”—that will launch this spring.

Mighk Wilson, FBA board member and a planner for MetroPlan talked about some of the details of these projects and how they were funded.

Staff from the Alliance and LAB elaborated on the many sub-categories of funding available through MAP-21, including TIGER grants and Transportation Alternatives.

As any good workshop on bicycling and pedestrian projects should, this session also included physical activity.

In this case, attendees took part in a “walking audit,” where everyone broke into groups to walk around downtown Orlando to look at the streetscape.

The goal was to point out areas that could be improved for bicyclists and pedestrians—and what funding source could potentially be used for the improvements.

This workshop is another example of the many ways FBA is trying to improve bicycling in Florida—by helping to provide local government with the tools they need.

After all, everything that really matters happens locally. The best thing we can do as a statewide organization is to be a conduit for information for individual cyclists, for bike clubs, and for local government.

We hope you agree.
Upcoming Bicycle Touring Events in Florida

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, your friends. Data are gleaned and summarized from an online calendar database maintained by Roger Pierce and published on the FBA web site. To add an event to this and (or) your calendar, e-mail to ftbe@pagecrap.com or go online to post your own entry. See complete calendar, including many out-of- state rides we don’t have room to print here, and much of the hype we edited out here version, at www.florida bicycleassociation.org/touring.

March

March 23 (Sun) Palm City
Riding for Heroes

Tropical Turtle Cycling Association (TCCA).
Benefit the LCP Justin J. Wilson Memorial Foundation, Inc.
40/60/106 mile options. All rides depart from LCP Justin J. Wilson Park (Palm City, FL) proceeding west through the beautiful northern section of the Park. The 106 mile route includes the northern shores of Lake Okeechobee toward the City of Okeechobee to the mouth of the Kissimmee River. Return south at the Herbett Huoker Dike along the paved section of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail to Port Mayaca and on through Indiantown to LCP Justin J. Wilson Park. Post ride lunch served, along with several fun events scheduled for the entire family. On-site registration/check in opens at 6:30 am and race starts 8:35 pre-registered with guaranteed T-shirt thru 3/2/14, regular $40 pre-registration thru 3/14/14 $45 day of event. Registration and breakfast open at 7:30 am, Metric Century 8:15 a.m., and 40 miler 9:00 a.m. Fully Sag supported with well stocked Rest Stops and marked routes. www.tittinustrips.org

March 30 (Sun) Sarasota
Southwest Florida Tour de Cure
20/35/50/65/100 mile route through the beautiful Sarasota County. T-shirts provided to riders. Lunch available at the end of the ride. 863-670-0734 (Eric) www.ridesforthesuccess.org

April

April 6 (Sun) Palm Coast
Cycle Flagler Ride for Rotary
25/40/65/100 mile tours scenic A1A and byways of Flagler County. A 16-mile route for beginners, Flagler County’s annual event. All 4 routes include cyclists wanting a shorter ride that does not include routes has been added. Mass start at 8 a.m. from the Fort Matanzas Park with a course from the High School to SR A1A in Flagler Beach. 8:10 a.m. for trail ride from the flageer County Airport. Five rest stops. T-shirts for the first 400 registered cyclists. Free cook out and refreshments at the end of the ride. Rotary Club of Flagler Beach, PO Box 2005, Flagler Beach, FL 32136.

April 6 (Sun) Fort Myers
Streets Alive!
Created to incorporate fun, fitness and food to promote active lifestyles by temporarily closing streets to motor vehicles and opening them up to people to bike, walk, and play. http://streetsoalive.com

April 6 (Sun) Cocoa Beach
Spacecoast Freewheelers 33rd Cross Florida Bicycle Ride
170 mile off-road ride from Cocoa Beach to Rupert. This isn’t your typical century ride. There will be minimal support with only 4 unmanned SAG stops that will stock an energy drink and water. You will depend on convenience stores for food and hydration. Route is heavily traveled and with only 4 unmanned SAG stops. Y ou will experience challenging climbs and thrilling descents along with abundant water. The route travels along quiet back roads, through wooded areas, and around picturesque Lake Weir. No rest stops, bike, repair equipment, and awesomely good food (breakfast and lunch) included. Entry fee: $35 April 6-9 33rd Cross Florida Bicycle Ride. All proceeds support Take Stock in Children, which provides college scholarships, volunteer mentors, and high school counseling to disadvantaged cycling low-income youth/students. http://pcfnf.com/events/cycling-for-success

April 12 (Sun) Amelia Island
Immacolake Ride for Literacy
15/30/62/106 mile routes through rural areas of Immacolata. Marked routes with SAG. Breakfast tacos, lunch and an “Immacolake Veggie Basket” to maps and roving sags are provided. http://nbcu.sc/ocean-side rest stops, Amelia Island and scenic Fort Clinch State Park. Pre-ride snacks, rest stops, post-ride lunch, mechanical support, motorcycle safety escorts, marked routes, maps and raving sags are provided. http://nbcu.sc

April 12-13 Lake Wales
Bike MS: The Citrus Tour 2014
50/70/100 miles day 1, 50/75 miles day 2. Two exciting circuits, enjoy the serene beauty of Bok Tower Gardens and enjoy the overnight stop at the Comfort Inn. Bike MS in fully supported with SAG vehicles, bike mechanics and well stocked rest stops. After the ride, enjoy the food and festivities at the Finsh Line Celebration. Celebrate the nationalmsso.org/citrus tour

April 12 (Sat) Fernandina Beach
Ride for the “Y”
Proceeds Benefit The Friends of Fahakhathe and The River of Grass Greenway. Ride starts at McLeod Park in Everglades City On- and off-road routes to choose from. Ride registration includes continental breakfast, and stations along the route, SAG vehicle support, maps, and a delicious lunch catered by a local favorite. 62 mile route starts at 8:00 a.m. (on-road) 11 mile route starts at 9:00 a.m. (on-road) 27 mile route starts at 9:00 a.m. (a combination of on and off roads, this route goes through the beautiful and wild Jane’s Scenic Drive in Fahakhathe) Registration and breakfast open at 7:30 am. Actlive.com Online Registration

April 26 (Sat) Gainesville
Ride To Remember
Choose a ride length of your choice on the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail, or 50/75/100 miles into the Ocala horse farm territory. Again this year: 25/50 mile rides from Fleming, FL. A benefit for Alachua County and AlA Place, providing Alzheimer’s Day Care. http://gcfca.org/rti

April 27 Tallahassee
TOSRV South Double Century and TOSRV Dirt
Start and end from Cairo, GA. Some new routes for the 2nd Century riders. Dirt and metric ride routes will remain the same. Day 1 ends in Albany, GA at Chehaw park where riders can choose to camp in Foster Village and hotels close to Chehaw Park. Shuttle service to and from the event hotels in Albany. http://cyclocats.org/tosrv

April 27 (Sun) Jacksonville
Tour de Forts
North Florida Bicycle Club. 18/54/92/175/200 miles. Online registration with complimentary T-shirt ends April 16. Members $30, non-member $35 per person entry, review uses member price. Late on-line registration without complimentary T-shirt expires April 19. Registration is closed. Tie of ride registration without complimentary T-shirt ($55) begins 6:30 AM. Ride includes cocoa county. 62 mile route through roads, ocean side rest stops, Amelia Island and scenic Fort Clinch State Park. Pre-ride snacks, rest stops, post-ride lunch, mechanical support, motorcycle safety escorts, marked routes, maps and roving sags are provided. http://nbcu.sc

May 1 (Sun) Hernando
Ride for the “Y”
Benefit Hospice of Marion County from November 10, 2012. Fully supported ride on paved bike trails in Citrus County. Rides of 16/40/62/100 miles available. Proceeds to benefit the Citrus County YMCA. T-shirts provided to riders. Lunch available at the end of the ride. 863-670-0734 (Eric) www.rotarybikergirofortheY.com

May 17 (Sat) Jacksonville
Tour de Cure - American Diabetes Association

May 17 (Sat) Ocala
Florida Bicycle Safari Ride
Presented by Ocala Eye, 800 a.m. 80/60/35 miles horse country farm. Event is sponsored by Ocala Police and Marion County Sheriff Departments. 5 SAG stops, rolling hills. The event includes a pot luck dinner at the finish, or memorable T-shirt and lunch. Proceeds directly benefit Hospice of Marion County’s programs and services. http://www.ocalaeye.com 352-854-6500 www.floridabicyclesafari.com

May 10 (Sat) St. Augustine
Velo Fest Wrigley Memorial Ride
Start and end from Old Town St. Augustine. Velo Fest, a 3 day festival to celebrate cycling and promote awareness of education and prevention of automobile related injuries. Events start on Friday with a family friendly free bike parade through St. Augustine, Saturday is event day at the Flagler College. Saturday morning will be fun and fast with Old City Crit where 3000 riders will take on the 0.8mi course at speeds up to 40 mph! Then off to our memorial ride in honor of John Wrigley who was a fixture on our streets for a long time, a hit and run April 2012. 15/40 and 110 mile distances both going through the beautiful farm land in St John’s County and passing Bryan's Ghost bike. Everyone gets our now famous shirt! Proceeds to benefit the Bryan J. Wrigley Scholarship and Velo Fest Community Initiative. This year it is on Mother’s Day Sunday, May 12, 2013. Bring your mom for a special surprise just for her www.velofest.org

May 10 (Sat) Hernando
Ride for the “Y”
Benefit Hospice of Marion County from November 10, 2012. Fully supported ride on paved bike trails in Citrus County. Rides of 16/40/62/100 miles available. Proceeds to benefit the Citrus County YMCA. T-shirts provided to riders. Lunch available at the end of the ride. 863-670-0734 (Eric) www.rotarybikergirofortheY.com

May 17 (Sat) Jacksonville
Tour de Cure - American Diabetes Association

May 17 (Sat) Ocala
Florida Bicycle Safari Ride
Presented by Ocala Eye, 800 a.m. 80/60/35 miles horse country farm. Event is sponsored by Ocala Police and Marion County Sheriff Departments. 5 SAG stops, rolling hills. The event includes a pot luck dinner at the finish, or memorable T-shirt and lunch. Proceeds directly benefit Hospice of Marion County’s programs and services. http://www.ocalaeye.com 352-854-6500 www.floridabicyclesafari.com
Recumbent riders 'bent on having a rolling good time

by Randall Williams

I’m sitting on damp parking lot pavement eye-to-eye level with a guy relaxing in what looks like a chaise lounge on three wheels. The guy is Dan Chiodo and the chaise is a Catrike 700 recumbent tricycle.

The parking lot slopes gently down to a fog-blanketed Lake Apopka. Coaxed by breeze out of the north, the fog bank brushes the lower edges of the lot and visibility through the mist is down to several hundred yards, obscuring the lake's far shore.

Two fishermen load a small runabout with gear, oblivious to the growing number of trikes parked or meandering around the lot.

In spite of my long sleeves and wind jacket I’m cold. Dan is in a short-sleeve knit shirt and cycling shorts and seems to notice the morning chill as we talk...9,280 of them, to be exact—in 2013.

You will find Michael Rubin most often on the Pinellas Trail churning out the miles—about his favorite pastime: riding his trike.

The reason we’re here—me counting the growing stony pressure points under my right gluteous and Dan looking as though he could lounge there all day long—is a rally and factory tour hosted by Orlando-based recumbent manufacturer, Catrike.

The company organizes this event—this is their 10th annual—mainly for Catrike owners, but the West Orange Trail rally is open to any off-brand cyclist willing to put up with a bit of gentle, good-natured hazing from the Catrike owners.

A handful of “regular” bicycles and a few foreign ‘bents stick out among the 200 or so riders waiting for the nine o’clock start.

Chiodo has ridden on all the rallies and our little chat is continually interrupted by greetings from other rally veterans—a really friendly group as it turns out.

I ask how long he has been riding recumbents and his answer is typical of other trike owners. “Almost 52,000 miles.” And that’s only counting the 700, his second trike. Altogether his road time is closer to 78,000 miles since he bought his first recumbent in 2003.

Now retired, he puts in 30 to 50 miles a day. It’s like a ride around the block, the offhand way he says it.

Later, I get a similar response from Michael Rubin, 86, who came over from St. Petersburg with his daughter to ride the West Orange Trail.

As his daughter hovers nearby worrying about a map Dad has misplaced, I admire his trike that, indeed, looks like he spends a lot of time on it. A Share The Road mini license plate is zip tied to the frame.

I ask how long he’s been riding. “28,000 miles. Last year it was...” he checks his trike-mounted odometer, which all riders seem to have. “...9,280.” Most of his miles are on the Pinellas Trail, he says.

Stillsmarting from my asphalt-level talk with Dan, I can’t help but clench a little, thinking of all those miles on a road bike. More miles than I put on my truck.

Go ahead and scoff, but you have to admit—if only secretly to yourself—that kind of mileage on an upright bicycle is not totally without discomfort.

That aspect of the upright bicycling is what has drawn so many to the recumbent world.

I ask around and learn that comfort, health and balance concerns are typical reasons for switching to recumbent trikes. No surprise. Today’s rally participants are a baby boomer crowd. My guess would be an average age of more than 60.

Boomers are a growing age group and a perfect target audience for recumbent designs. Was this in the back of Catrike founder Paulo Camasmie’s mind when he brought his mechanical engineering skills from his native country, Brazil, to central Florida, determined to design, produce and sell ‘bent trikes?

Apparently his instincts were sound. Since Paulo introduced his first trike in 2000, the company has built a growing fan base of avid Catrike owners.

Yearly production has climbed to more than 2,300 trikes and bikes (a Catbike model was introduced in 2010), all made in the U.S.A.

After the rally, many of the riders will head for Orlando to tour the new factory (opened in May, 2013), with 10,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing space and touted by Catrike as the largest dedicated trike production on the planet.

I run into a couple from Oviedo who are relaxing in two of the larger trikes in the parking lot. Concerned about being seen on the road, they had their Catrikes customized by Utah Trikes, which, among other modifications, replaced the 406c wheels with 24-inch front and 28-inch rear. The larger diameter on the back required a rear fork extension.

The extra length means “it has a bit of pedal steer, but not too bad,” says Oviedo Guy.

Pedal steer. I realize there’s a lot I don’t know about recumbents... Yet.
Good News, Mr. Smith! The IRS now allows your employer to give you a tax-free reimbursement of up to $20 per month for reasonable bicycle related expenses as a qualified bicycle commuter.*

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