In my 33 years as an international cyclist, I've never been one to follow other riders' routes, preferring the small risks inherent in developing my own "originals" rather than the security of painting by numbers. And, even in this electronic age, I abstain from internet research, confident that good surprises will outnumber bad ones.

With no compulsion to prove anything, I seldom embark on epic trans-continental tours. I just like to ride my bicycle on smooth, quiet roads with curiosity as my only guide, with beauty as the only objective. Taking inspiration more from birds than from other cyclists, my latest journey was, however, a bit of an aberration from the usual zigzagging wanderlust. I decided that I'd see what it was like to migrate south in September.

After picking up one of my oldest touring bikes that I keep with friends near Oxford, England, I would take the train and ferry to Calais, the northernmost port city in France.

Then, with the 13 days remaining of my vacation, I hoped to pedal from the English Channel to the Mediterranean Sea.

As usual, I'd travel with no tent, no sleeping bag, no hotel reservations, no phone, no GPS, no computer, no guidebook... just like a bird. But unlike my avian role models, I don't have wings so I would bring along bits and pieces of old Michelin maps, scale 1: 200,000, and follow the back roads, indicated in white, along which one typically only sees 3 or 4 motor vehicles (counting tractors) between one town and the next...

11 September 2014, day 2, near Gournay, France.

The meticulous attention that I devote to my bikes, components and accessories would surely be the envy of the clientele of my family practice back home in Whistler [British Columbia]. Consequently, I rarely experience even a puncture let alone any major mechanical disaster. It makes for pleasant riding but rather dull material for postcards.

But today proves exceptional. After a photo op at Chateau Minerval, I hit a minor bump while riding across a grass parking lot and my frame breaks! The rear triangle is almost completely detached from the down tube. I'm not upset and not even totally shocked… after all, the bike is 27 years old, and this is not the most tragic event to occur on this day in history. I also rationalize that it's probably not the worst mechanical failure that can happen in a rural area, 100 km from the nearest bike shop. The frame is steel so it just needs welding, and isn't that something that most farmers can do in their own barns?

Language is no barrier as I'm fluent in many, so I present my dilemma to a passing motorist only to learn that local manpower is away, harvesting elsewhere...
Ask a Lawyer...

Why join FBA?

by J. Steele Olmstead, Esq.

The urge to get on a bicycle shouldn’t be a death wish. Many times, folks don’t want to hear from a lawyer. Like when I officiously meddle in the child rearing of some couple who’s precious seven-year-old is riding in circles on an under-sized bike with training wheels and no helmet.

Sorry, I am going to say something..."Do you know how to care for a brain damaged child?” comes to mind. But we sometimes have to speak up.

I.

The human species was suspected of mutual cooperation as an evolutionary adaptation eons ago. This allowed for many advantages over other land animals: protection for children when the wolves attacked and communication when hunting for food, bartering and trading.

Labor unions brought us the 40-hour work week and health insurance benefits. We have always done better as a people cooperating toward a common goal.

When you are struck by a car on your bicycle (sorry for the fatalism here) you may notice law enforcement in many places is blissfully unaware that you are a vehicle or that you can’t swerve three-feet to safety unless you were trained by the circus, or that cars must stop before crossing a sidewalk so they don’t hit you.

So what do you do? Hire a lawyer. Fine. Your problem may be solved.

What about the bigger problem? Who’s taking care of that? You could hire a lobbyist. You could go to Tallahassee and meet with your legislators. That would be nice.

Who knows those folks and talks to them? (Hint: FBA)

II.

You are someone who wants in some small way to be free. Free of excess body weight, free of plaque in your arteries, free of poor circulation, free of the parking problems of cars, and free of the crushing cost of cars.

Bicycling is the answer. Really. And you know it. Bad knees from running? Bicycling! Poor circulation? Bicycling! Lack of energy and stamina? Bicycling! Low sex drive? Bicycling! This wonderful activity has to be done somewhere.

Sidewalks and roads are the usual solution. But, who makes sure the sidewalks and roads are safe for us? Wait! Who’s even keeping track of these issues for us?

You are healthy, you are engaged, you are active, you care about your community, and you want the community better.

More cars, more pavement, and more traffic lights have not gotten us out of our transportation dilemma. Alternative transportation will make the next step toward releasing traffic congestion.

And one primary alternative is sitting in your house right now—the bicycle. Who gets this issue in front of the decision makers? Who starts the campaign and keeps it going?

It starts with you. You at the local level informing powers-that-be of your concerns, and then you can take it a step upward.

III.

Who can go to Tallahassee to speak up for you and cyclists just like you or who’s keeping track of these issues at the state level? FBA! The Association does all of those things and more. But we need more tribe members, more family, more union brothers and sisters, more team mates and more cyclists, any cyclists, to unite together under the FBA umbrella.

To make your ride, the laws, the roads, our paths and our rides..... to make IT better, join our tribe, our family, our union, our United State of Florida Bicycling. Join us in the FBA. Urge your Bicycle Club to join and ask your favorite bike shop owner to join. Only FBA has the united voice that can get the message to the lawmakers and make them give us the space on the roads to which we are entitled.
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Membership Categories:
- Lifetime ($1,000+)
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- Benefactor ($100 - $249)
- Supporter ($50 - $99)

Membership includes a subscription to the FBA Messenger.

Welcome New/Rejoining Members!
- Acme Bicycle Shop
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- BikeSport Bicycles
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- The Bike Shop of Winter Haven
- Jon & Earline
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- Suzy Bone
- Central Florida Randonneurs
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- City Bike Tampa
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- Dragon Sports
- The Bike Shop of Winter Haven
- Coastal Cruisers
- Bicycle Club
- Billy's Bicycle Shop
- Wheels of Wellington
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- Chainwheel Drive
- Retro City Cycles
- City Bike Tampa
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- John Egberts
- Mary Burns
- Pati & George Sousa

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- Naples Cycley
- John Ramseysky
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- Sunbelt Bike Club

Join FBA

Join FBA online at
www.fbamembership.org

Individual..........................$25
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Student/Living lightly.........$15
Snowbird...........................$15
Bicycle Club - Full membership...$100
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Higher donations are greatly appreciated! Membership includes a subscription to the FBA Messenger.

Visit FBA's Website

www.floridabicycle.org

Log in to the FBA Blog
Stay up-to-date on bicycle issues with this statewide forum.

FBA's Blog on the website
www.floridabicycle.org

Messenger Deadlines

Copy and Advertising Deadlines:
- Summer Messenger - May 15
- Fall Messenger - August 15
- Winter Messenger - November 15
- Spring Messenger - February 15

Inquiries and submissions:
Becky@floridabicycle.org
Where has it gone?

By the time you read this Thanksgiving will have come and gone; I hope you had a wonderful one!

As we look back on 2014 I am sure we all have a lot to be thankful for! I’m a glass-half-full person and while I don’t think I am a “Pollyanna” type I do try to look on the bright side. And I do feel that FBA is heading in that direction!

Please welcome Becky Afonso as our new Executive Director. Becky brings a new outlook and fresh ideas to FBA.

In addition to attending a lot of meetings and presenting awards to well deserving members of the cycling community, she is revitalizing our website and communications with our member base.

She is reaching out to the bike shops and bike clubs to get the word out to cyclists: FBA is here to educate and advocate for excellence in Florida bicycling.

I have seen some very positive movement for cyclists in Florida this year.

In November, Amendment 1 was passed by Florida voters. This will pave the way (no pun intended) for completion of the Coast to Coast Connector.

When I watched the video posted on their website—http://fgtf.org—I couldn’t help but be excited for the possibilities this can create for cyclists and Florida.

The Coast to Coast Connector is now a true reality and hopefully not that far in the future.

Though a fully finished Florida trail system may be years off, think about the possibility of cycling across the state of Florida or even more exciting: north to south and east to west and back again.

We should all be excited about that.

We are seeing some interesting FDOT things happening for cyclists in Florida as well.

It appears there is a change to the “one size fits all” approach to road design and bicycle lanes.

I know here in the First Coast area on one very well-traveled road we have seen lane size for cars reduced and the width of bike lanes increased. It appears to be working well for cyclists and motorists.

Here on the First Coast there appears to be an attempt to involve cyclists in some of the road design and connectivity issues. I am hearing and reading about issues in other cities that are being addressed as well.

It appears FDOT may be listening to some of the things we cyclists have been concerned about for years.

You all need to keep up your hard work being involved in local issues to make sure they are kept in the forefront and addressed accordingly.

As we move forward to 2015 (YIKES!), we are in need of prospective board members.

We need board members who are willing to promote FBA and support our mission and who will assist us in our pursuit of new and renewing members—not just individuals but bike shops and clubs.

With the legislative session soon to be upon us we need folks to help us do the research in the development of our two-year plan.

You can let us know of your interest via the website: www.floridabicycle.org.

In closing, I wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa and/or any other end of year/religious event you may celebrate. May your holiday be pleasant and bright and may your New Year be safe and prosperous.

Be Safe, Be Seen, Be Relevant—RIDE BIG!

November 15...

Florida Bicycle Club Leadership Workshop

15 participants representing 11 bicycle clubs throughout Florida attended our 2014 Florida Bicycle Club Leadership Workshop on Saturday, November 15.

Presentations and discussions ranged from the cost of public awareness campaigns to frontiers in sports nutrition.

CyclingSavvy’s group riding segment proved to be the highlight of the afternoon, presented by Keri Caffrey, Executive Director of the American Bicycling Education Association.

Thank you to presenters and participants for making the workshop an educational success.

We look forward to providing the workshop again during the next Horrible Hundred weekend and will consider adding an additional workshop in the Polk County area for 2015.

Florida Bicycle Association Annual Awards

The purpose of our annual awards is to bring attention to the efforts and achievements of groups, organizations and individuals who forward FBA’s vision for all Florida bicyclists to be safe, respected and encouraged to bicycle for transportation and recreation.

Are you our next worthy recipient or know someone who is? Visit our website for more information and to complete an online nomination form. Deadline for 2014 nominations is January 31, 2015. Contact Becky Afonso for more information, becky@floridabicycle.org.

(Clockwise from above right) 2013 Bike Store Advocate, Orange Cycle, Owners Deene Breed & Howard Larlee; 1 to r, Co-owner Deena Breed and several members of her crew; 2013 Citizen Advocate, Darla Letourneau, BikeWalkLee (l) with Dan Moser and Becky Afonso; 2013 Off-Road Bike Club, Flagler Area Bike Club. Leader Kevin Phelps (r) with FBA ED Becky Afonso.
Just wishing won’t make it so

I say I’m non-competitive, and yet, my mind is constantly racing. The thoughts are as rapid fire as the flashing beacons at pedestrian crosswalks, which can be equally exhilarating and exhausting.

Several good ideas have come from members and from within on the betterment of Florida bicycling that my mind starts to piece processes together on how to implement plans of action.

Naturally, I want to take action. NOW. increase FBA membership—unify FBA membership with communications exchange and sharing of best practices; educate the masses on bicycling as a safe and healthy means of transportation and recreation; demand transportation design for people FIRST; and change the culture to where people care for each other as equal participants in the transportation system—motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians—and travel in harmony.

Not only do I wish to take action now, I want it DONE.

I realize wishing won’t make it so, but I also realize anything is possible and if you wish for any of these ideas as I do, then we can work together to make it happen.

Ooo, I used a four-letter word: W-O-K. Sorry, but that’s the reality check. This is going to take work and, believe me, there’s enough to go around that all of us will need to contribute.

To make things happen there will be no free rides.

But here’s the good news: there are numerous ways you can contribute to Florida bicycling that won’t make this seem like work at all.

In fact, with the right attitude the work can be as fun as cycling itself.

No. Really. I’m not making this up.

Here are some suggestions that may work for you:

Be Courteous
I sometimes catch myself not smiling while riding a bicycle, which immediately makes me laugh.

Why? Because bicycling for me is a simple pleasure with benefits too many to mention.

It’s not work, even if I am riding to work. It is fun, hence the smile.

The laugh comes from having to remind myself how silly it is to forget the fun.

What does this have to do with being courteous? Well I don’t know about you, but I’m more likely to be nice when I’m happy and smiling.

Nice is contagious; just smile at someone and see if they don’t smile back.

Attend public meetings
I offer this from Brian Adams, San Diego State University Department of Political Science:

Public meetings are frequently attacked as useless democratic rituals that lack deliberative qualities and fail to give citizens a voice in the policy process.

Do public meetings have a role to play in fostering citizen participation in policy making? While many of the critics view public meetings as a means to an end, many of the more recent critics argue that public meetings can be used to achieve other ends, such as decisions made by governing bodies, they can be used to achieve other ends, such as sending information to officials and setting the agenda.

As a complement to deliberative political structures, public meetings have a role to play by offering a venue in which citizens can achieve their political goals, thereby enhancing governmental accountability and responsiveness.

Volunteer
Give up the ride every once in a while and volunteer.

For this I offer a quote from the author of The Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan: “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who cannot repay you.”

During this season of giving and throughout the year, give a little of yourself and be amazed with what is gained.

Support
We work together when we support each other. Support FBA by being a member in good standing, a generous sponsor or a gracious donor.

FBA supports you in numerous ways, which include but are not limited to being your cycling voice in Tallahassee, serving on the board of the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation and participating in two Florida Department of Transportation committees: the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Coalition and the Bicycle Pedestrian Partnership Council.

Getting back to unifying FBA membership and volunteering, how about this as something I can do for you: Let’s say your FBA member bicycle club or FBA member bicycle shop gives to the community or volunteers in a community project, like hosting a bicycle children’s rodeo or fund-raising for a charity.

Now let’s say FBA recognizes this act and sends a letter to your local elected officials to inform and educate on the good deeds of your club or shop.

This is the kind of news the media often overlooks, but I’ll be happy to spread the word in support of bicycle positives.

Shift into overdrive…let’s say I put a form on the FBA website, a “spinning the positive” achievement form that you fill out and submit…wheels are always turning for the betterment of Florida bicycling.

Stay in touch with FBA!

Subscribe to our weekly blog from the FBA website: www.floridabicycle.org
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/FloridaBicycleAssociation
Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/FloridaBicycle

Giving 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 or e-mail becky@floridabicycle.org.

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.
First Coast Chapter report...

**Jax: not yet Bicycle Friendly, but doing what it takes to make a difference**

by Stephen Tocknell, FBA First Coast Chapter Director

In spite of massive efforts on several fronts to improve conditions for bicyclists in Jacksonville, the city’s name does not show up on any of the Bicycle Friendly lists that have been issued this year by the League of American Bicyclists—not even on the list of cities that received an honorable mention.

There is a reason Jacksonville did not attempt to qualify as an LAB Bicycle Friendly Community this year: it was obvious our application would have failed.

The League relies heavily on bicycle commuting rates and bicycle crash data in making its determination. Our bicycle commuting rate is too low, and the rate of bicycle crashes here is way too high.

There are plenty of people riding bicycles all over Jacksonville, but whatever our actual rates of bicycle ridership may be, those rates are not reflected in the data compiled by the Federal government through the American Community Survey, which registers bicycle ridership as the percentage of those surveyed who report that they commute to work “primarily” by bicycle.

**American Community Survey**

To get a metric that can be applied uniformly to every city in the USA, the League relies on the survey data to gauge overall levels of bicycle ridership nationwide.

According to the survey, only 0.4% of work trips in Jacksonville are by bicycle, and our rate of growth in bicycle ridership for work trips actually fell by 17% from 2000 to 2013.

Our high level of bicycle crashes—670 per 10,000 daily bicyclists—makes us look even worse than our reportedly low level of work trips by bicycle.

Like other Florida cities, Jacksonville has far too many high speed high capacity roadways and not nearly enough bike lanes, trails or greenways. There is no quick fix for this problem.

But there are good reasons for Jacksonville bicyclists to be hopeful.

The City of Jacksonville has formed a Context Sensitive Streets Standards Committee (CSSSC), which has been charged with changing the way that all roadways are designed in Jacksonville, so that bicycle and pedestrian safety will be more directly addressed whenever new roadways are built.

This action by the city is much more meaningful than a complete streets policy, in that it covers all roadways in Jacksonville, including urban, suburban and rural roadways, across all 840 square miles of the Consolidated City of Jacksonville and Duval County.

Jacksonville bicyclists are represented on the Jacksonville CSSSC by Chris Burns, former FBA board member. In addition, I serve on the CSSSC myself as its Chair, and as the urban area representative.

**More good news**

There’s more good news for Jacksonville, including a recent announcement by FDOT that it intends to build a multiuse path for bicyclists and pedestrians alongside I-95 across the St Johns River, at a cost of over $19 million.

At the local level, the City of Jacksonville has established two different dedicated sources of funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including a set percentage of mobility fees, similar to impact fees, that are imposed on all new property developments in Jacksonville.

The other dedicated source of funding is 20% of one cent out of the 6-cent local option gas tax, which the city council voted to extend this year, from 2016 to 2036. The yield from the gas tax will mean up to $1 million per year will be made available for bicycle and pedestrian projects in the City of Jacksonville.

To guide new investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, Jacksonville has budgeted over $250,000 for 2015.

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**Tampa hopes to solve tourist parking problems, relieve traffic congestion**

by J. Steele Olmstead

As one of Florida’s oldest, storied and historic cities, Tampa’s roots go back to the native peoples who explored its sheltered bay and lived and camped on its shores. Leisurely explorers of modern day Tampa, since 1946 when the public trolley system was dismantled, have had a problem getting around the downtown.

Effective alternative transportation has eluded Tampa for years. The trolley’s replacement—personal automobiles—proved to be a poor solution.

Of the parking garages, many are private; the public ones are few and far between. Tampa’s many authentic attractions are difficult to get to:

- Wonderful museums, like the Glazer Children’s Museum, Tampa Theatre, and Tampa Bay History museum. Amazing hotels like the historic Floridan and the exclusive Le Meridien hotel (ideal for a romantic weekend). Graveyards dating from the 1600s on the town’s north side.
- Historic University of Tampa, Riverwalk, Channel Side, Florida Aquarium, Kiley Gardens.
- Sacred Heart Catholic church with its stunning Gothic architecture. First Baptist Church and its lofty cathedral.

Tampa Downtown Partnership (who was united with Dealers), Karen Kress of Bike Share and FDOT.

In December, the rest of the bikes roll out with park stations around downtown Tampa, Ybor City, Hyde Park, Davis Islands and along Bayshore Boulevard.

Tampa, long one of the deadliest cities for pedestrians and cyclists, is changing its transportation culture.

This is “long overdue” according to Tampa government insiders and bicycle advocates like Jim Shirck.

---

“We want this city to be bike-friendly and we want everyone to know that they need to share the road,” Mayor Buckhorn said. “These blue bikes will go a long way because people will see more of these bikes [from]... Ybor City to downtown to Hyde Park.”

These two areas are distinct, separated by a mesh of stop-lights and traffic limitations for cars. The blue bikes will easily navigate these barriers making possible the annual Christmas tree lighting at Hyde Park.

The bike share program has 100 folks who are members even before the launch. Eric Trull said he hopes to add 150 more by the general launch on Dec. 7, 2014, at Water Works Park, a new park that is connected to the Riverwalk park extending the southern border of Tampa on the Hillsborough River.

Founding memberships in Coast Bike Share are being sold through www.coastbikeshare.com.
FDOT now requires a 7’ wide buffered bike lane on new construction within 1 mile of an urban area on arterial State roads, and on reconstructed or resurfaced roads where space permits. The “buffered” bike lane is simply a “normal” bike lane with a buffer space marked out between the bike lane and the adjacent travel lane. The buffered bike lane is NOT a “separated bike lane” or a “cycle track” with a raised physical barrier between the bike lane and the travel lane (and which are not allowed on state roads until we have a better understanding of their safety benefits.)

Our designers at FDOT “found” space for the wider bike lane by REDUCING the lane width for urban arterial roads from 12’ to 11’ on roads with a speed of 45 mph or less, so we’ve actually reallocated space from the motor vehicle travel lane to the bike lane.

For faster roads within an urban area and within 1 mile of an urban area, we’re simply adding more width to the bike lane. In rural areas, we’ll be using the “rumble stripe,” which was described in a column earlier this year [Summer 2014, pg 11], but keeping the 5’ paved shoulders we’ve used for many years.

The safety benefit is not actually from the buffer itself—only a pavement marking, it will not redirect an errant motorist or prevent a child from riding out into the travel lane.

Riding in a buffered bike lane is still riding in traffic, just as with any other bike lane. The safety advantage comes from its added width. The old 4’ bike lane, for instance, did not provide much room to dodge obstacles or to reposition for better observation at driveways or intersections. Wider is better.

The buffer itself is simply two 6-inch wide lines with an 8-inch space between (see the attached drawing.) This buffer marking sends a clear signal that the bike lane is a preferential use lane (not simply the shoulder of the road with unimportant things in it) and makes the lane look too narrow to easily fit a car, yet leaves as much space as possible for the cyclist.

Florida has a three-foot passing distance law, but it’s hard to enforce when everyone is simply staying in their travel lane.

The new bike lane standard includes the minimum operating width of 4’ plus the 3’ clear passing distance (4+3= 7) all in the same lane.

To encourage motorists to merge into this wider bike lane to turn right (rather than give you the ol’ right hook), the new standard uses a dotted line on the 150’ approach to an intersection, creating a “mixing area” or transition area where you will share the road with right-turning motorists – just as you would if you were controlling a travel lane. In places with right turn only lanes, we will continue to use the “keyhole” designs we’ve used for years, and the keyhole lane width will match the bike lane width where possible.

In addition, the new standards place shared lane markings (SLMs or “sharrows”) in the center of the travel lane, whenever they are used. We can discuss SLMs more in future columns, but I wanted to let you know that we did move the SLMs to reinforce the idea that when a lane too narrow to share, it’s okay to control it.

In preparing these modifications over the last year, FDOT made use of FBA’s technical support and assistance. Executive Director Becky Afonso, and previously Tim Bustos, received regular briefings on the development of the buffered bike lane concepts and provided valuable feedback. Thank you, FBA! Working together, I believe we’re creating better facilities for Florida’s cyclists.

FDOT makes major revisions to state bike lane standards by DeWayne Carver, AICP, State Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, FDOT Roadway Design Office

HAVE YOU BEEN INJURED WHILE CYCLING?
(I 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 with his expertise and insight in the courtroom. This unique perspective provides cyclists across Florida with the representation they deserve.

Your race for compensation begins here.

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today. So I fall back on a personal skill of which I'm even more proud than my cycling: hitchhiking.
I don't know what it is, but it never takes me long to bum a ride, even with a bike in tow. Sure enough, the very first suitable vehicle stops and delivers me to the nearest auto body shop, 12 km away.
I don't even have time to duct tape over the sticker on the frame that reads VERS UN MONDE SANS AUTO (Towards a World Without Cars) before the bike is handed over to the mechanic.
Not initially particularly sympathetic (it is closing time, and maybe he noticed the sticker?), Aurelien concludes that I need a new bike.
I explain that as a minimalist, I'm reluctant to add to my current collection of 14. All the others are in perfect condition but I just don't happen to have another one with me here at the moment.
Then perhaps another sticker on the bike comes to the rescue. It's a Canadian flag. The French have always felt sorry for French Canadians, so helplessly overwhelm by dominant Anglo North America culture.

Bike shop mechanic, Aurelien, performs major surgery on the 27-year-old Raleigh frame.

tomorrow. Patience has always seemed to me the most boring of virtues, so I appeal for immediate attention to the matter, offering a postcard from the coast of Spain as incentive, as well as any amount of cash that he desires.
A mere 50 euros and 90 minutes later, I'm back on the bike, its frame as stiff as new, and only slightly crooked! I will subsequently learn from an old Raleigh merchant back in Oxford that 1987 was a bad year for Reynolds 501 chromoly steel frames. Many broke years ago. I hope to get another 27 years out of mine.

12 September, day 3, Nogent-le-Roi, France.
FROOME! FROOME!” some drunkard shouts from across the bar, evidently mistaking me for last year's winner of Le Tour de France.
How disappointing; I would much rather be taken for this year's champion, fellow Sicilian Vincenzo Nibali, a much more handsome man.

13 September, day 4, Arrou, France.
Overestimated yesterday, underestimated today... Not having the looks of Nibali, I'm never approached by attractive women when touring. Just little boys and old men seem to notice me. They usually want to know what I have on my head.
For some reason helmet rearview mirrors have never been available in Europe. This particular old man has a few more questions... “Where are you headed?” he asks.
“I hope to end up somewhere near Barcelona”
“How long will that take, 2 months?”
“No, more like 2 weeks, but not quite.”

13 September, Chartres, France.
I long ago learned to avoid touristy areas as much as possible when traveling by bike... too many people, too many cars.
Besides, with homes in Whistler, Vancouver, and Fort Lauderdale, I already spend enough time in such places. And what is the point of going to see the Eiffel Tower or the Mona Lisa anyway, when you know exactly what they look like before you leave home?
I'd rather discover stuff that you can't google... like an old tree, a broken windmill, a new live bird or a ruined castle, far from the madding crowds and safe from any English Contamination, immersed in another language.
A culturally-focused four-state touring region is developing along the south Atlantic coast through a partnership between the East Coast Greenway Alliance and the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, a congressionally designated National Heritage Area of the National Park Service.

The route lies between Armstrong, Florida, and Wilmington, North Carolina. It passes along unbridged but ferry-accessible barrier islands, national monuments, wildlife refuges, and through communities at risk from intrusive development and sea-level rise.

Throughout are local seafood restaurants, general stores and craft markets.

Much of the route through the current decade will remain along back roads. Cyclists can locate the route online by using new ECGA mapping tools [see the sidebar at right].

The Alliance is helping focus the region with interpretive content and by co-marketing locally resourceful tourism with participating agencies. Historic rice growing and seafaring communities pocket the region.

Lodgings along the corridor range from campgrounds and hostels to houses for rent. Towns like St. Marys and Darien, Georgia and Southport, North Carolina offer bed-and-breakfasts, as do cities like St. Augustine, coastal Jacksonville and Fernandina Beach. Atlantic Beach, St. Marys, Brunswick, Savannah and Charleston offer non-chain and chain hotels. Awendaw, South Carolina, offers a Kayak & Cabin rental.

“This is a pioneering partnership for a trail advocacy organization like ours,” says Durham-headquartered Greenway Alliance Executive Director Dennis Markatos-Soriano.

“If we want people to travel without cars, it makes sense for the Alliance to put them in touch with what makes our route special.

“Slow down and smell the roses is only a metaphor for what we all want more of in our lives. We want to smell simmering shrimp fresh off the catch boat, the same as we want to discover local barn jams and driftwood beaches where we can still be alone among flocks of shorebirds.”

For information about corridor lodgings outside of Florida:

www.visitsavannah.com
www.charlestoncvb.com

For a 60-mile touring route north of Charleston:
http://ridewithgps.com/routes/6469067

Above: The SeeWee Restaurant, in Awendaw, South Carolina, is one of the locals’ favorite seafood eateries.

Below: The new ECG Trip Planner...map.greenway.org
and smartphone app...
Search: East Coast Greenway
...enable better planning and touring on the ECG. Registered users can create custom point-to-point cue sheets, or export GPX files for use on a Garmin or other GPS device from their home. Travelers along the ECG can use the app for navigation, turning their phones into a GPS device.

Nicest feature? Users can add points of interest and amenities such as historic sites, public restrooms, bike shops, and lodgings to aid other travelers using these tools.
Florida Bicycle Association
Central Florida's Polk County is the “Cycling Capital of Florida.” Explore more than 60 miles of paved multi-use trails and 1,700 miles of pre-mapped road routes. Unlike most of Florida’s flat terrain, Central Florida’s unique topography provides elevation changes of more than 300 feet, so your cycling adventure won’t fall flat! Ready to ignite the fire inside yourself? Scan the QR code now to learn more.

800-828-7655  facebook.com/VisitCentralFlorida  twitter.com/VisitCentralFL

Calais, France, to Tarragona, Spain
continued from page 8

But I do make an exception for Gothic Cathedrals, the most sublime buildings in all of human history. This 800 year-old building is world famous for its stained glass, most of it dating back centuries.

But, frankly, I’m rather disappointed… thousands and thousands of human images engaged in all sorts of activities, but not one cyclist!

When traveling alone, I’ve learned that the key to getting a good self-portrait in such places is finding the tourist with the biggest camera, and then handing him yours. Here in Chartres, I do even better. I see a man with a tripod, and better yet, he looks Japanese. Sure enough, with no instruction whatsoever, he composes a perfect shot on his first attempt.

14 September, day 5.
Making up for the lost time of the frame repair (actually only 3 hours in total), and benefiting from a gentle tail wind and relatively flat terrain, I’ve pedaled 544 km in the past 3 days through almost 100 towns and villages. That’s a line of latitude daily...like a bird on migration.

16 September, day 7, Monpazier, France.
Over 1,000 times in my life I’ve awoken in the morning with no idea where I was going to sleep that night. Organization is my middle name so I am naturally a precrastinator (the opposite of procrastinator) in all domains but one: accommodation.

I seldom start my search sooner than an hour before sunset. As a photographer, I value the light provided by a low sun. And as a cyclist, the last hour of the day is often the most comfortable as heat and wind abate.

But travelling off the beaten path, I know that I must take whatever lodging I can get when daylight starts to fail me (my legs never do, accustomed as they are to the effort).

Only twice in my life have I been caught out and forced to sleep outside like a proper vagabond. (Two nights ago that may have been in retrospect a better choice than the cheap hotel at Chateau Renault. I am still scratching the bed bug bites acquired there.)

But this evening, I hit the jackpot and come upon the perfect place at the right time: the 3-star Hotel Edouard I. Built in the 18th century, it is actually one of the newest structures in this charming medieval village.

There’s a computer in the lobby so I catch up on a week of e-mails, primarily to make sure I’m not missing any funerals, as my parents are 88 and 93 years old.

Continue Tom’s epic journey in the Spring 2015 edition of the FBA Messenger.

DeMarco at Chartres Cathedral. Photo by a helpful Japanese guy with a tripod.
Do you have a question about the laws related to bicycling?

Ask Geo @ FlBikeLaw.org*

George Martin

November 4, 2014 – via Contact FBA:

Q: My City is putting up Bicycle route signs, the rectangle green signs with a bicycle on it with the ledger, Bike route, at the entrance to SIDEWALKS. Some of these are not even 4 foot wide some 6-foot wide.

I thought that these signs were meant to alert MOTORISTS that this street is a low traffic street and to be alert for bicyclist on this street as it is designated as bike route as well. I bike the streets; to me this is misleading the community as to where bicyclist should be riding.

Can you clarify me in more detail as to the use of these signs.

Frans

PS. I am trying to get more familiar to rules here in Florida.

I am originally from the Netherlands and everybody bikes there etc.

[Frans also posted his question the next day via Adventure Cycling, Executive Director Becky Afonso replied from FBA and Saara Snow, Travel Initiatives Coordinator, responded to the Adventure Cycling post.]

November 5, 2014:

A: Hi Frans. Thank you for contacting the Florida Bicycle Association. I’m not from the North Port area to know why the city is putting those particular signs up, but will place a few inquiries to see if I can’t answer your question. I will let you know what I find out.

— Becky Afonso, FBA Exec. Director

Frans

Hi Frans. Thanks for your inquiry...

I don’t believe there is any situation in which a sidewalk should be marked as a bicycle route, but without knowledge of local bicycle laws it is difficult to know the intent of that placement. I have copied David Lee, our contact from the Florida Dept of Transportation, who may be better able to respond to your question, or could provide you with a local contact who may know.

— Saara Snow, Travel Initiatives Coordinator

[FBAs inquiry generated these responses:]

November 5, 2014 - These signs can be used on shared use paths, for instance, so they are not exclusively for use on-road. The real risk to the installer of these signs is that conventional sidewalks are not built to the accepted design standards of a bicycle facility, so by installing these signs, the installer is setting up a crash by direction cyclists onto a facility that is not designed to accommodate cyclists.

— DeWayne Carver, AICP

State Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator

A: November 5, 2014 - DeWayne summarized the situation pretty well. The MUTCD defines “Designated bicycle route” as “a system of bike ways” (emphasis added) designated by the jurisdiction having authority with appropriate directional and informational route signs, with or without specific bicycle route numbers” [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/htm/2009r12/part1/part1a.htm#section1A13]. Bike Route signs are guide signs intended to help cyclists follow suggested routes; they have no regulatory bearing—there is no rule that requires a cyclist to follow a signed bicycle route where available.

However, a municipality that installs Bike Route signs on a sidewalk (that doesn’t meet recognized standards or guidelines for “bike ways,” e.g., as described in the “Florida Green book”) increases its exposure to liability, by appearing to recommend the use of a non-bikeway facility as a bikeway.

— Dwight Kingsbury, Member, NCUTCD Bicycle Technical Committee

[And from George Martin of Ask Geo...]

A: November 5, 2014 - Here’s my summary of some pertinent documents:

Bicyclists may use the sidewalk unless a local regulation prohibits it.

s. 316.2065 – Bicycle Regulations

2. A person propelling a vehicle by human power upon and along a sidewalk, or across a roadway upon and along a crosswalk, has all the rights and duties applicable to a pedestrian under the same circumstances.

Sidewalks are intended for pedestrians.

s. 316.003 - Definitions

47 – Sidewalk—That portion of a street between the curb line, or the lateral line, of a roadway and the adjacent property lines, intended for use by pedestrians.

The Department of Transportation description of a bicycle facility does not include the sidewalk.

FDOT Plans Preparation Manual (2009 latest version?)

8.4 Bicycle Facilities

…Bicycle facilities include bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, wide curb lanes, shared use paths, traffic control devices, and bicycle parking facilities.

In the Glossary of Terms, this is what they define as a bicycle way. It does not include nor exclude the use of sidewalks as bicycle ways.

4. Bicycle Way: Any road, path or way which by law is open to bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are signed and marked for the preferential use by bicyclists or are to be shared with other transportation modes. Examples include bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, shared use paths, and traffic lanes.

This is what it says about bike routes.

8.4.4 Bicycle Route Systems

Bicycle route systems are linked to signs to aid bicyclists. Bicycle route systems are ineffective unless signs are highly specific, giving a clear indication of destination. It may be advantageous to sign some urban and rural roadways as bicycle route systems. Bicycle route signing should not end at a barrier. Information directing the bicyclists around the barrier should be provided. The decision whether to provide bicycle route systems should be based on the advisability of encouraging bicycle use on a particular road, instead of on parallel and adjacent roadways.

The roadway

Please see Ask Geo, page 12

*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.
width, along with factors such as volume, speed, types of traffic, parking conditions, grade, sight distance and connectivity to transit, should be considered when determining the feasibility of bicycle route systems. Roadway improvements such as adequate pavement width, drainage grates, railroad crossings, pavement surface, maintenance schedules and signals responsive to bicycles should always be considered before a roadway is identified as a bicycle route system. Further guidance on signing bicycle route systems is provided in the MUTCD.

I could find nothing in the MUTCD that addresses the use of a Bike Route sign on a sidewalk and nothing that specifies says sidewalks are or are not bike routes.

My guess is that the entity installing these signs is looking for trouble due to the potential liability.

— George Martin, "Ask Geo" FLBikeLaw.org

November 5, 2014 - I just found a 1999 version of the AASHTO publication, it says this about sidewalks as signed bikeways: Page 20. Designating Sidewalks as Signed Bikeways. In general, the designated use of sidewalks (as a signed shared facility) for bicycle travel is unsatisfactory. (See Undesirability of Sidewalks as Shared Use Paths, page 58.) It is important to recognize that the development of extremely wide sidewalk walks does not necessarily add to the safety of sidewalk bicycle travel, since wide sidewalks encourage higher speed bicycle use and increase potential for conflicts with motor vehicles at intersections, as well as with pedestrians and fixed objects. Sidewalk bikeways should be considered only under certain limited circumstances, such as:

a. To provide bicycle continuity along high speed or heavily traveled roadways having inadequate space for bicyclists, and uninterrupted by driveways and intersections for long distances.

b. On long, narrow bridges. In such cases, ramps should be in- stalled at the sidewalk approaches. If approach bikeways are two-way, sidewalk facilities also should be two-way. Whenever sidewalk bikeways are established, unnecessary obstacles should be removed. Whenever bicyclists are directed from signed shared roadways to sidewalks, curb cuts should be flush with the street to assure that bicyclists are not subjected to problems associated with crossing a vertical lip at a flat angle. Curb cuts at every intersection are necessary, as well as bike-way yield or stop signs at uncontrolled intersections. Curb cuts should be wide enough to accommodate adult tricycles and two-wheel bicycle trailers.

In residential areas, sidewalk riding by young children is common. With lower bicycle speeds and lower cross street auto speeds, potential conflicts are somewhat lessened, but still exist. Nevertheless, this kind of sidewalk bicycle use is accepted. It is inappropriate to sign these facilities as bicycle routes. In general, bicyclists should not be encouraged through signing to ride facilities that are not designated to accommodate bicycle travel.

— George Martin, "Ask Geo" FLBikeLaw.org

November 5, 2014 - Saara and Frans. I’ll be happy to help.

— David Lee, FDOT

November 5, 2014 - DeWayne. Will you please help with the response to Frans or respond directly to him?

—David Lee, FDOT

[Our Florida Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator working double duty.]

A

November 6, 2014 - Frans. I was contacted about this very question yesterday by FBA, and I can only assume you are the instigator! I’m copying this to George Martin at FBA who handles their “AskGeo” website, as he has already been working on this and may have responded separately also.

While there is no specific prohibition to signing sidewalks as “bike routes”, it’s generally not a good idea and is discouraged in bicycle planning guidance. Sidewalks are built for pedestrians, operating at pedestrian speeds (about 3 mph). Cyclists moving at about 6 mph on level ground, just stay upright on the bicycle. So, you are exceeding the “design speed” of the facility by 100% when you ride a bike on the sidewalk! That’s like driving 60 mph on a 30 mph road.

There are very specific criteria and standards for constructing a path that is suitable for bicycle use, and these can be found in FDOT’s Plans Preparation Manual as well as the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities. Unless the “sidewalk” in question has actually been designed to these standards to support bicycle travel, it will be safer for adult cyclists to use on-road facilities (bike lanes or riding in the travel lane) so the use of bicycle route signs on the sidewalks would be questionable.

The Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways (commonly referred to as the “Florida Greenbook”) can be found at the link below. It has guidance appropriate to local government streets for the use of the various bicycle facility types.

http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rddesign/FloridaGreenbook/FGB.shtm

I hope this helps—please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

— DeWayne Carver, AICP State Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator

[Becky from FBA and Frans then posed a key question.]

Q

November 6, 2014 - ...So what could one do the have the sign use reconsidered? Who would one contact to start that conversation?

— Becky Afonso Executive Director, FBA

November 6, 2014 - ...is there a coordinator whom would inform North Port or other city’s of these recommended rules and regulations?

— Frans

[to Becky:]

A

That’s a good question because, in a typical Florida municipality, just tracking down the office responsible for traffic signing on a roadway can require a good bit of online sleuthing and phone calling.

Are the roads in question maintained by the city or the county? The City has a staff directory at http://www.cityofnorthport.com/index.aspx?page=697. In a municipality that hasn’t outsourced traffic-engineering functions, the responsible office typically has the word “Engineering” in its name and is under a department named “Public Works”. I see the City’s online directory does list such an office; phone number for the Engineering Division Manager might be a good one to call first.

If the signs in question haven’t (yet) given rise to any demonstrated confusion, though, the official may simply say, “Well, we think the signs are a good idea. So we’re keeping them.”

That certainly happens. So it may pay to wait and log a couple incidents (e.g., on date X, on street with sign Y, a motorist pointed to the sign and called at me to ride on the sidewalk), then send a letter or e-mail reporting the >documented< problems to the official. This results in a public record.

In the meantime, might not hurt to cover the question in a column in the quarterly newsletter.

— Dwight Kingsbury Member, NCUOTC Bicycle Technical Committee

If you managed to stay with us this far, you have seen how much effort goes into answering questions about bicycle laws. Responses that end up in the “Ask Geo” blog at www.AskGeo.org and in edited form in these pages, have been given the same amount of attention to detail. While FBA’s responses should not be relied on as law (our necessary disclaimer since we don’t adjudicate them), on the whole, they provide good advice on riding safely.
Drivers license does not afford special privilege

The size of the vehicle empowers bullies. I came across a copy of a letter to the editor and will use her comments (shown in italics) to address the mistaken idea that a driver’s license grants special rights on public roads.

Her arguments:
1. “Do you have a valid driver’s license to operate your vehicle?”
   - In fact, the Constitution of the United States and of the several states grants all persons the inalienable right to travel on and use the public roadways. There is NO MENTION of motor vehicles.
   - “Can you operate your vehicle to maintain the speed limit?”
   - What part of “limit” doesn’t she understand? Limit means the maximum speed you can legally travel. Under the law, so even though we didn’t make any of the League’s lists this year, the JBPG has voted to support an application for bicycle-friendly status sometime in 2015.
   - We may not make it as early as next year, but we remain hopeful that the League will somehow recognize the many efforts that are being made to make Jacksonville safer and more attractive for bicyclists of all skill levels.
   - Bicycles seldom impede traffic because only Interstates have minimum speeds.
   - In order to legally operate a motorized vehicle, we must wear a seat belt, have liability insurance and have a license to operate a vehicle.

What causes a motorized vehicle to belong? All people have an equal right to use the public roadway. In many instances the courts have struck down as unconstitutional, laws restricting the use of the public roadway to certain classes of people or vehicles.

What causes a motorized vehicle to belong? All people have an equal right to use the public roadway. The possession of a permit to operate a motor vehicle does not grant special privileges.

Signing for an operator’s permit limits those rights, and privileges. To be granted a permit, you must agree to restrictions, give up freedoms and accept severe penalties for violating those restrictions.

If you doubt me, read the regulation on arrest for “suspected” DUI (Driving Under the Influence).

An operator’s permit does not give greater license nor does it afford superior rights to the public roadway. The size of the vehicle only allows the operator to be a “bully.”

Riders, defend your rights, ride big, ride assertively and ride safe.

All people are equal on the public roadways and deserve equal respect.
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. Ask 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 his (and our) calendar, e-mail to fba@piercepages.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 in this here version, at www.floridaebicycle.org/touring.

January 2015
January 10 (Sat) Alachua
Tour de Felasco (FILLED)
Off-road bicycle tour, held each year on the second Saturday in January. 50 miles of rolling terrain (plus optional mileage for a metric century), $55. Registration opens in October and typically fills in within an hour.
http://sanfelcastours.net/tour.shtml

January 11 (Sun) Venice
Piggy’s Revenge Endurance Challenge
20/40/60+ miles of off-road good- ness in Sarasota County Florida. Self-supported single track, gravel, dirt, sand and water ride. The 20 and 40 options will have single track riding more suitable for mountain bikes, the 60 mile is a gravel grinder and includes some road riding. Big loops connect sev- eral wilderness areas. 1800 Mabry Carlton Pkwy, Venice, FL 34292. http://piggyrevenge2012.blogspot.com

January 11 (Sun) Boca Raton
Tour of Boca
Sponsored by the Boca Raton Bike Club and the City of Boca Raton. Ride begins at Patch Reef Park, 2951 SW High- way A1A, Boca Raton, FL 33432. Registration: 9:00 AM start from the Holiday Inn, corner of 441 and University avenue (see the Facebook page for parking instructions). 110 miles with one brief food stop at about 45 miles. Expect substantial acceler- ation with 40+ miles to go. Print the map from the link on the Facebook page if you wish to pre- complete the last 40 miles as a tour.
www.facebook.com/events/1530188470539960

January 15 (Sun) Naples
Naples Big Gun Challenge
Ride start and end in the heart of Naples. Multiple distance routes throughout Naples and the sur- rounding area. This is an event for everyone! It will be a fully sup- ported road ride with brunch on the beach.
http://naplesbiggun.org

March
March 7-8 Miami
Bike MS: Breakaway to Key Largo
50/75/100/125/150/175 miles. FIU Stadium to Key Largo and back! Registration fees will range from $20 to $40. Fundraising minimum: $350. Fully-supported: SAG, police, mechanics, medical, rest stops every 8-10 miles. Amenities: 5 meals, Saturday night pool party, camping (if not hoteling it), hotel shuttles, and hotel raisings away. All skill levels welcome. Registration: www.msbikeflorida.org. Questions? Call 954-731-4224 or e-mail fls_msbike@nmss.org

March 8 (Sun) Boca Raton
Tour of Boca
Sponsored by the Boca Raton Bike Club and the City of Boca Raton. See January 11 listing for ride details.

March 14 (Sat) Fort Myers
Rotary Club of Fort Myers Memorial Ride
March 14 (Sat) Gainesville
Ride To Remember 9
Choose a ride length of your choice on the Gainesville Highway Trail, or a road ride into the Ocala horse farm territory of 50/75 mi. 50/25 mi. rides from Flemingdon. Benefits ElderCare of Alachua County and Azf Place, providing Alzheimer’s Day Care.
http://ecocfa.org/rtt

March 20-27 Blountstown
Caverns to Coast Tour
Bike Florida. Details: see ad on page 9 and story on page 15 of this issue.

March 22 (Sun) Fort Myers
Annual Royal Palm Classic
March 22 (Sun) Palm City
Riding for Heroes
Treasure Coast Cycling Association (TCCA). Benefits the LCPJ Justin J. Wilson Memorial Foundation, Inc. 40/56/80/105 mi. All rides depart from LCPJ Justin J. Wilson Park, 2050 SW Mapp Road, Palm City, FL 34990, 80/105 mi., 7:30AM, 60 mi., 8:15AM, 40 mi., 9AM. Post ride lunch served, along with several fun events scheduled for the entire family. On-site registra- tion/check-in opens at 6:30AM. Advanced $35 preregistration with guaranteed event T-shirt thru 3/10/14, regular $40 preregistration thru 3/12/14, with $45 (cash or check only) day of event registra- tion. SAG supported, marked routes. Registration and/or Packet Pick-up available Saturday, March 21st, 3-6PM at Vine & Barley Palm City, 2951 SW High Meadows Ave., Palm City, FL 34990 772-787-7171. The Clarion Inn, 1200 South Federal Highway, Stuart, FL 34994 is the host hotel, with a special rate included for partici- pants and their families. Contact them directly at 772-287-7890. Preregistration options, route maps, and other details: www.justinwmsfoundation.org

Active.com Online Registration

March 28 (Sat) Punta Gorda
Punta Gorda Pedal and Play in Paradise
62/30/15/10 mi. Mystery ride in the morning, City Mgr/History ride in afternoon. Pre-registration via Active.com or mail. Registration opens 7 am at Laishley Park, 100 Nesbit, Punta Gorda, FL 33950.

April
April 2 (Sat) Naples
Pitt Florida Challenge for Hungry Kids
160 EPIC MILES CROSSING FLORIDA. 100 COURAGEOUS RIDERS. 250,000 MEALS FED TO HUNGRY KIDS. Across Florida from Naples to Palm Beach. 100 miles the first day, overnight dinner and accommoda- tions at Roland Martin Marina on Lake Okeechobee. 60 miles into downtown West Palm Beach City Place for Finish line Party on day 2., Fully supported ride- water stops, SAG. Registration limited to 100 spots. First come first serve and best hotel rooms. E-mail joining Bikechallenge@florida.org or call 561-40024712. www.pittfloridachallenge.org

April
April 4 (Sat) Inverness
River for the “Y”
Fully supported ride on paved bike trails in Citrus County. 10-124 mi. (Double Metric Century) rides available. Proceeds benefit the City of Inverness YMCA. T-shirts pro- vided to riders. Breakfast and lunch available for all riders. 863-670-3704 (Erie).
www.ymcaflorida.org

April 9 (Sun) Immokalee
Immokalee Ride for Literacy
62/30/15 mi. through rural areas. Marked routes with SAG. Breakfast tacos, lunch and an “Immokalee Veggie Basket” to take home included in regis- tration. Door prizes during lunch. Registration opens at 7:00 am at the start: Farm Workers Village, 1800 Farm Worker Way, Immokalee.

April 19-24 Gainesville
Horse Country and Springs Tour
An inn-to-inn cycling adventure for a small group of riders who are looking for a different kind of Florida touring experience. Route highlights include a ride thru the Paynes Prairie Preserve and the Alachua Sinks, a visit to the Historic home of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (author of The Yearling), and a chance to explore the amazing cycling opportunities in the horse country around Micanopy, FL. Opportunities to kayak in sev- eral of Florida’s amazing state parks. All this coupled with terrific support, great meals and the com- panionship of your fellow riders make this tour a surefire favorite. Space is limited to 20 people, so register at 352-224-8601 http://bikestores.com/tours/the-horse- country-and-springs-tour/

April 26 (Sun) Jacksonville
Tour de Forts
North Florida Bicycle Club. 21/38/62/100 miles. On-line registra- tion with complementary T-shirt ends Monday April 14th. Members $40, non-members $55. Late on-line registration without comple- mentary T-shirt ends Wednesday April 23. Day-of-ride registration without complementary T-shirt ($65) is at the school, Saturday, April 25, 1-4 pm, Sunday, 6:30 am. For road cyclists of all abilities. Pre-ride snacks, rest stops, a post- ride lunch, mechanical support, motorcycle escorts and roving SAGs will be provided by NFBC. The Tour de Forts is a fund-raiser. Ocala Police will provide traffic control. All you have to do is ride and enjoy the day. http://nfbc.us/
Bike Florida’s 2015 spring ride...

The Caverns to Coast Tour

by Ken Foster, Bike Florida Spring Tour Ride Director

Bike Florida’s 2015 spring ride is headed to the North Florida Panhandle for a taste of its rural routes and salt air.

Reserve March 21-27, 2015, for some early season riding.

Our last ride in this area, the Forgotten Coast Tour in 2012, proved to be an exceptional tour.

We will relive a few of those routes while exploring mostly new areas. With 1-, 2-, 5-, and 7-day ride options, this tour is designed to fit just about any travel schedule. Only three “move days” allow you to take a day off the bike to explore our host community.

Our tours are designed for active, recreational riders. Ride at your own speed, stop to explore or push hard till the day’s end. You get to choose how many miles and what speed to ride.

Tour cost includes: rest stops (about every 15 miles), SAG (support and gear), indoor and outdoor camping, marked routes, maps, cue sheets, entertainment, first class showers, a beach party, end of ride party and quality vendors to take care of your bicycle, camping services or meal needs. This a great tour for the hard core cyclist looking to lay down some early season miles, or the first time tour rider inspired to take a new challenge.

Indoor and outdoor camping are the most popular accommodation options, although hotels are available. Indoor campers enjoy a local gymnasium while the outdoor campers enjoy the pleasures of being outside.

The Dixie Grill will cater this year’s meal plan; breakfast and or dinner options are available. They have served thousands of cyclists over the years. Look for their restaurant the next time you pass through Live Oak, Florida, near the intersection of I-10 and I-75. Lunch is on your own; available at the numerous towns we ride to and through.

No Sweat. Shower Service will join us again. If you rode the 2012 tour you will recognize their high quality shower truck.

Bubba’s Pampered Pedalers is available if you prefer a tent service. They set up your tent, deliver your luggage and provide a place to sit and visit with friends.

Or try Captain Quarter’s Sherpa Service. They carry your gear but leave the set up process to you. Captain Quarter’s also provides a place to sit with friends.

Fair Shot Coffee will be there with premium fair trade organic coffee with smoothies and limited breakfast options as part of their service.

Looping out of Blountstown to Marianna then down to Port St. Joe before heading back to Blountstown offers riders the chance to experience some wonderful farmland before heading to the coast.

Blountstown sits on the banks of the Apalachicola River; Marianna is home to Florida’s only public cave system; and Port St. Joe offers welcome views of the bay and rides to the beach. Once discovered, you will come want to come back to these communities time and again.

Watch our web site and blog post as we venture off for a pre-ride of the route the first week of December. Or sign up for our newsletter at BikeFlorida.org.

Join us in March of 2015 for our 21st annual spring ride, the Caverns to Coast Tour.

For complete details visit BikeFlorida.org or contact Ken Foster, Ken@bikeflorida.org, 352.224.8602.
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.*

We can keep you up to date with the latest rulings affecting cyclists everywhere, offering quality tax and financial accounting services with the confidence and solid reputation that comes from over 30 years of quality service to the Central Florida business community.

We're proud to support FBA and its mission to promote good health and well-being in our communities through bicycling.

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