

2016 Annual Award Narratives

Bike Club: *Sumter Landing Bicycle Club, John Komoroske*

In 2014, The Villages - home to the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club (SLBC) - was awarded a Silver Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists. There are only two other Florida communities to receive this designation, the highest level currently held in the state.

The Sumter Landing Bicycle Club decided to work with The Villages cycling community to go for the gold, taking the steps outlined by the League to improve their ranking. The steps included improvements to what is known as the 5 E's: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation and Planning.

Over the last year, SLBC has improved public education with regular articles in the local paper and presentations at numerous organizations within The Villages, in addition to bicycle safety tips featured in every weekly e-newsletter to club members and using its eight certified League Cycling Instructors to provide in-depth safety briefings at each monthly membership meeting. SLBC maintains a positive relationship with law enforcement, encouraging the placement of 3-foot passing law stickers on vehicles. It gained the good will and encouragement of The Villages community by its pledge to raise, through sponsorship of a popular challenge ride, \$325,000 for the local hospital, \$70,000+ of which has been raised in the last two years.

President John Komoroske put his planning skills to the test by working with SLBC members and through The Villages Bicycle Friendly Advocacy Group – a coalition of community bicycle clubs and advocates – to create the first master bicycle vision for The Villages. If Sumter Landing Bicycle Club succeeds in their quest for gold, The Villages will be the first Bicycle Friendly Community in the state of Florida with this designation.

Off-Road Bike Club: *Florida Off-Road Cycling Enthusiasts (FORCE)*

Florida Off-Road Cycling Enthusiasts (FORCE), under the leadership of president Gerry Kinnard, has truly become a force to be reckoned with for off-road bicycle trails in south Florida. Every weekend for the past three years, Gerry has personally clocked 1500 volunteer hours of trail maintenance for Broward and Palm Beach County parks.

Fostering relationships with Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation and with the Palm Beach County Sports Commission have yielded numerous off-road riding opportunities. FORCE is in pursuit of developing an off-road system from Fort Lauderdale to Fort Pierce, in a contiguous single-track 100 miles long. One key component is a pedestrian bridge built over the L-40 canal in Boca Raton, a project the Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization will fund.

The club hosted the first “Dual at Dyer” duathlon last spring and continues to attract sponsors to support FORCE poker rides at Pinehurst, Full FORCE time trials, and Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day BBQ. Southeast Florida trails and off-road riding opportunities continue to get better thanks to the efforts of Gerry and FORCE.

Enforcement Agency: *Indian River County Sheriff's Office*

Early last year, Sheriff Loar met with Bike Walk Indian River County and Vero Cycling board members to discuss bicycle and pedestrian safety. From this meeting, a training tool called Florida Bicycle Law for the Law Enforcement Professional was developed to ensure the deputies understood current bicycle laws.

Sheriff Loar then initiated new tracking codes be implemented on the deputy's car computers to reflect bicycle related stops. In the last nine months of 2016 more than 650 stops were made for riding on the wrong side of the street or riding without lights at night. As a result, over 75 light sets were distributed with the deputies installing them on the bikes for the riders.

The Indian River County Sheriff's Office created a Public Safety Announce video highlighting the need for motorists to give three feet of clearance to bikes and posted on the IRC Sheriff's Office web site. Sheriff Loar also assigned Deputy Teddy Floyd to manage the collection, rehab and distribution of bicycles to children and the needy in Indian River County. Last year 336 bikes were acquired, rehabbed and donated to the needy and in December alone, an additional 250 bikes were donated. Many of the recipients of these bikes have no other form of transportation so the bikes help them get to and from work, making the bicycles a source of pride and independence.

The Indian River County Sheriff's Office is an extraordinary example of leadership and commitment to bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Educator: *Tiffany Sabiel, John Hopkins All Children's Hospital*

Tiffany Sabiel began providing Safe Routes to School pedestrian and bicycle safety education through in-school programming and community events in Pinellas County in 2009 via All Children's Hospital. She steadily increased reach in Pinellas County to thousands of children through schools and community events – a total of 50 schools and 18,117 children in 2013/2014 alone.

Due to Tiffany's experience and success in Pinellas County, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital promoted her to supervise their Safe Routes to School programming in other counties (currently 15). These programs teach pedestrian and bicycle safety to over 87,000 students in 262 schools last year, and are on track to reach over 100,000 students this year.

In 2016, Tiffany became a certified League Cycling Instructor by the League of American Bicyclists, and is also a statewide Regional Trainer for a 'train the trainer' program that educates adults how to teach pedestrian and bicycle safety to others.

Supporting Agency: *Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation*

The Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation (FGTF) has mobilized a broad coalition to support the state plan to connect local trails into a functioning network of safe, scenic and "sun-sational" trails for residents and global visitors. FGTF focuses on making recreational trails a state transportation and recreation priority in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Protection.

These pathways will offer residents and visitors a scenic, safe and healthy transportation alternative connecting local communities to Florida's state parks, natural landscapes and waterways. The Foundation has provided vision, inspiration and facilitation leading to Florida's system of greenways and trails. The 2013 "Close the Gaps" campaign will soon come to fruition as the Coast-to-Coast Connector, a shared use, non-motorized multi-use trail from St. Petersburg to Titusville, estimated to be completed by 2022.

Program: *The Bike Rehab Project*

A few years ago, Deputy Teddy Floyd of the Indian River County Sheriff's Office and Malcolm Allen, Owner of Orchid Island Bikes and Kayaks, quietly began collecting donated bicycles. They rehabbed the bicycles and gave them away at Christmas to adults who needed transportation but could not afford a bicycle and to children in the Gifford neighborhood whose families could not afford to buy bikes for Christmas.

In early 2016, Julianne Price with the Florida Department of Health noted that there are still a lot of people in Indian River County who need a bicycle but cannot afford one. Clearly Malcolm and Teddy needed help. Members of Vero Cycling (the local recreational bike club) and Bike Walk Indian River County (a local safety advocacy group) came to the rescue.

Mike Vincent began organizing volunteers to meet monthly to rehab bikes. Jean and Jake Piper stepped in to help expand the program by meeting monthly with residents at three local homeless shelters either to provide bike maintenance for those who already owned a bike or to provide free bikes (and helmets) for people without them. Bike safety education classes were added to the distribution of bikes, taught by local League Cycling Instructors. Donations were collected to purchase quality light sets to be installed on all of the rehabbed bikes and bikes brought to the homeless shelters for repair.

The program has rehabbed and distributed approximately 251 bikes, serviced another 247 bikes and installed light sets on 206 bikes. The Bike Rehab Project is a community effort with a wide base of volunteer support of both time and money that continues to grow every year.

Event: *Team C2C Cross Florida Ride*

Kevin Miller fell in love with cycling over 25 years ago while in college and beginning each summer with a college ministry week-long bicycle trip. The idea of leading a group of both novice and experienced riders through a physical and spiritual adventure got his attention. When Kevin settled in Tampa over 20 years ago, he talked 6 'brave souls' into joining him on a weekend bicycle ride across the state of Florida. From that very memorable first ride, he has not stopped leading groups across the back roads of Florida, from one coast to the other.

Kevin is the driving force behind Team C2C, a Christian cycling group leading unique, life-changing group rides across Florida. People come from all over the country to participate in the one-day spring ride or the three-day fall event. The routes are strategically selected for safety and natural beauty.

These rides are really about the journey, not the destination. This journey includes opportunities for personal reflection and growth to enhance the bicycle ride experience. As it says on the website, "more important than your ability to ride a bike is your ability to do life well". A ride with Team C2C promises that you will share more memories and laughs than you probably have in years. This is a ride that will impact your life in a profound way.

Bicycle Professional: *Christine W. Fanchi, Livability Planner, City of Fort Lauderdale*

Not only is Christine one of the nicest individuals you will ever meet, she is a registered Professional Engineer (PE) and Professional Transportation Planner (PTP) with 17 years of experience in transportation planning and design. She is a huge bike advocate both on and off the clock and together with her three sons, they actively ride and attend neighborhood rides and bike advocacy events.

Since joining the City of Fort Lauderdale Transportation and Livability Department, as the Livability Planner in 2015, Christine has integrated engineering and planning experience into achieving the City's Vision to be a multi-modal pedestrian friendly city through creating plans, engineering designs, and events. She also led efforts for the adoption of Vision Zero Fort Lauderdale in 2015 and continues to lead implementation of plans with a focus on coordination.

Additional efforts have included leading the design and construction of Fort Lauderdale's first Complete Streets project, changed design plans for Sharrow Design into Buffered Bike Lanes in specific areas and drafted letters to FDOT engineers to remove Sharrows along specific corridors that have resulted in serious injuries to bicyclists.

Christine has supported many more efforts within the City to create safer streets, encourage walking/biking and educate officers and community members about behavior expectations. She is a true champion for biking, alternative modes of transportation, safer streets and is active anywhere she can to make things better for all users.

Citizen Bike Advocate: *Brian Smith, Florida Greenways & Trails Council*

Brian Smith served Pinellas County as director of Planning and later as executive director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for a total of 41 years; retiring in November of 2011. During his last County Commission meeting, it was noted that Brian's legacy is too big to recite in one meeting. It was also noted that Brian likely will continue his 'tireless advocacy for the beauty and functionality of the place we call home.'

That was six years ago. In his retirement, Brian continues his legacy, his accomplishments and yes, his advocacy. His commitment to continue to be involved in planning work without being a consultant for hire is commendable.

Brian currently serves as chair to the Forward Pinellas Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He is also a Governor's appointee to the Florida Greenways & Trails Council serving as the current chairman and is Vice President of the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation. He will modestly refuse to take any credit for what is known as the Pinellas Trail or the Coast-to-Coast Connector, claiming only to be a 'facilitator and helper'.

For those that know and work with Brian, he is a respected leader, a thoughtful facilitator and a champion.

Bicycle Business: *Recyclable Bicycle Exchange*

Led by Jeff Torkelson, Recyclable Bicycle Exchange (RBX) is the most active, most diverse bike-based group in South Florida. It is part charity, coop, educator, trainer, idea sharing group, club, ride organizer, bike shop, antique bike collector, man/woman cave, warehouse, safety advocate, friendship builder, bike parking specialist, bike event generator and much more.

RBX is an all-volunteer bicycle based charitable organization, a Florida Nonprofit Corporation with a not for profit 501(c)(3) designation. In a nutshell, RBX collects used bikes, repairs them and then reallocates them out to the youth (and now adults too) of South Florida. It works to promote an active and healthy lifestyle to allow kids to ride and play, adults to exercise or to look for or get to work, cycling safety and increase bike awareness through bike repair education and bicycle-based employment training.

RBX awarded its first bike in 2009 and now awards hundreds of "new to me" bikes, hundreds of brand new helmets, provides hundreds of single parts and hundreds of adjustments each year. While the bikes are allocated/awarded on "needs based" criteria (ex: single parent household, low income, health issues, etc.), the helmets are not needs based. Anyone who will wear a helmet is eligible to receive a brand new helmet and all come with a custom fitting by a trained and "certified helmet fitter".

RBX also provides one-on-one and group bicycle repair training, bicycle based employment training, bike rodeos and bicycle and pedestrian safety training too. It is a big supporter of

Complete Streets, is the premier bike valet/parking vendor for public, private and city events, and was a formal advocate of "rules of the road", Vision Zero, and bike/pedestrian speaking/programs.

Bicycle Business: *Bubba's Pampered Pedalers*

Bubba. Where to start? How about 1993 when Bubba attended his first weeklong bicycle tour in Missouri called C.A.M.P. (Cycle Around Missouri Parks)? For eight years after that tour while attending four to five bicycle tours a year, Bubba kept thinking how the experience of bicycle touring would be better if it weren't for the "tent thing". When Bubba retired from the St. Louis County Police Department after 27 years of service, he fulfilled a lifelong dream of riding solo self-contained across the country. During this journey, the next phase of Bubba was born: Bubba's Pampered Pedalers.

Fast forward to today. It's one thing to offer tent service, better known as PAMPERING, during bicycle tours across the country. It's quite another to sustain FIVE signature tours of his own making. Just this year Bubba initiated the Florida Space Coast Tour and continues to offer his first and best tour, BubbaFest Florida Keys, in its 13th year. How does he do it?

Teamwork – friends, family and crew – all looking out for the customer. Priority number one is customer safety from point A to point B, period. Bubba truly loves people and is more than willing to be your friend *after the tour*. Those that have been pampered by Bubba will say with all certainty, "It's All Good!"

Bicycle Friendly Community: *Mayor Marni Sawicki, City of Cape Coral / Cape Coral Bike-Ped*

On November 16, 2015, the League of American Bicyclists awarded Cape Coral, Florida the bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) designation in recognition of the city's accomplishments in creating a 90-mile network of interconnected bicycle and pedestrian friendly paths. Within a few short years, the public-private partnership between the City of Cape Coral, the volunteer group Cape Coral Bike Ped and community leaders have created a network of seven dedicated bike routes that encourage residents and visitors to discover landmarks, facilities and recreational activities throughout the city. The interconnected routes border nature preserves, scenic canals, marinas, golf courses and the Caloosahatchee River.

Ultimately, it's going to cost Cape Coral \$63 million to create a 231-mile network of bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly roads in the city. The city continues to explore ways to pay for the completion of their bike and pedestrian master plan and in the process, achieve a silver level Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League.

Trails Promoter: *Herb Hiller, Founder & President, St. Johns River-to-Sea Alliance*

The St. Johns River-to-Sea Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was formed in July 2016 to support, advocate, enhance and protect the St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop multiuse trail.

Headquartered in DeLand, FL, the board and advisory board is comprised of a who's who in bicycling, including co-founder Maggie Ardito, former Volusia County Council Member Pat Northey, creator of the Atlanta Beltline Ryan Gravel and Florida's first state Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and current director of Innovation and Inspiration at Blue Zones, Dan Burden. Herb Hiller, co-founder and past president, is the original visionary of what is known as "the Loop" and continues to serve on the advisory board.

For nearly four decades Florida trail leaders like Hiller, Northey, and others have continued to work diligently to make this trail a reality. The East Coast Greenway Alliance has designated the St Johns River-to-Sea Loop as part of the East Coast Greenway, with the Eastern sections being the primary route and the Western sections designated as an alternate route.

Ranked behind Central Florida's Coast-to-Coast Connector in terms of priority statewide, the "Loop" will receive funding from the Florida Department of Transportation's Shared Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail funding.

It is the vision of the Alliance to become a model for stimulating local, regional and global involvement in addition to supporting and promoting trail planning, development and use.

Volunteer: *Hans Van Tol, Capital City Cyclists*

Johan van Tol (Hans) is a physicist/research scientist at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory at FSU, mainly dealing with researching new materials with magnetic resonance techniques. Born in the Netherlands, his bicycle was his principle means of transportation through his middle school/high school and university years.

After coming to Tallahassee in 1998, Hans did some recreational riding, and occasionally bike-commuted as well. In the last few years he has made the decision to become a more or less daily bicycle commuter which triggered his interest in traffic safety issues, especially those related to cyclists.

Hans believes that by increasing the awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and how safe driving practices lowers crashes, so many lives could be saved. Hans is a member of the Capital City Cyclists, serves as their advocacy chair and recently took on the role of club president.

Hans regularly attends the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency meetings as well as City of Tallahassee Commission meetings and serves on the Joint City/Council Bicycle Workgroup. Hans has fought and continues to fight the good fight for bicyclists.

Elected Official Champion: *Senator Kathleen Passidomo, District 28*

As a State Legislator, Kathleen Passidomo relies on her experience as a Southwest Florida resident of over 35 years to address the most important issues within her community. Lee and Collier counties, part of District 28, are among the top 20 high priority counties for pedestrian and bicycle crashes and fatalities. In her own experience, Kathleen knows there can at times be more cyclists on the road than motorists.

“Half the people in this state are cyclists, the other half don’t like cyclists,” said Kathleen Passidomo. “So we need to create a common sense approach to the problem of motor vehicles crashing into cyclists.”

Kathleen Passidomo has filed legislation to protect cyclists; twice as a House Representative and this past year as a Senator. She has also co-sponsored legislation to enhance safety for school crossings. Although these bills are yet to be signed into law, the sheer determination and persistence to protect vulnerable road users, especially children, is worth recognition.

Special Recognition: *Richard Cahlin, Bicycle Action Committee*

Richard Cahlin founded Bicycle Action Committee, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to raise funds and awareness for local bicycle initiatives. Richard’s experience in business and passion for cycling led to the creation of bicycle clothing that is adorned with local business sponsor logos and the designated city’s logo to raise money for bicycle safety initiatives and projects in that area.

Through the sale of the city-specific clothing, the Bicycle Action Committee raises money to be given back to the cities to spend on local bicycle projects and initiatives. The Bicycle Action Committee partners with local bicycle organizations to sell the clothing at events, local stores and community centers.

This unique public and private partnership is a win-win across the board. Funds are raised for bicycle projects and bicyclists proudly wear clothing of the city and community partners who literally have their back. Recently, the City of Golden Beach joined 14 other South Florida communities who, through the Bicycle Action Committee, are supporting cyclists and projects for safer cycling.

Special Recognition: *Kurt Eichin (Posthumously)*

On July 4th of 2016, we lost a friend of cycling, Kurt Eichin. A lover of adventure, Kurt fully appreciated the well-formed wave, the view from the mountain top, the sunset over water, and the thrill of getting there on a bike.

Kurt was a Transportation Planner for the Florida Department of Transportation and subsequently served as a Legislative Analyst and Staff Director for the Transportation

Committee in the Florida Senate. His "Crazy Guy on a Bike" blogs are a peek into his adventurous, fun-loving spirit.

On November 4, 2016, the Board of the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation passed a resolution recognizing Kurt Echin as an honorary board member. This recognition was a reflection of the important role he played in crafting what was to become the SUNTrails legislation creating a source of funding for shared-use, non-motorized trails in the state of Florida.

Kurt was not shy to ask questions on bicycling legislation being filed and it is to his credit that legislation in 2016 to remove Florida Bicycle Association from the Share the Road specialty license plate proceeds was defeated in the Senate. We were saddened to learn of Kurt's passing due to cancer, but his inspiration and achievements for Florida cycling will live on.