



The Squeaky Wheel

Issue No. 57

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

December 2007

From the President **Pining To Get Back In The Saddle**

By Lea Brooks

I'm typing this primarily with my left hand since my right arm is in a brace to make sure my mangled collarbone mends properly.

Sooner or later, cyclists who log thousands of miles every year are bound to get in a bad crash. My time came Nov. 11 on a beautiful fall Sunday afternoon. Like most crashes, mine was 100 percent preventable.

I have made hundreds of U-turns on the American River Parkway bike trail and made the one that caused the crash just like the others. Look back to make sure no cyclists are behind you and then turn. For reasons I'll never be able to explain, I did not see the cyclist who hit me from behind as I began my U-turn. The crash occurred about 1.5 miles east of Nimbus Dam on the north side of Lake Natoma.

I've crashed before, but this was the most violent one. Dennis (I'm only going to use his first name) and I ended up tangled in our bikes in the middle of the bike trail gasping for breath. Thank goodness we were both wearing helmets. Other cyclists quickly stopped and gently helped us off the bike trail and called 911.

I knew right away that my right collarbone was broken. I was more concerned about Dennis, who had landed on his head and had several face lacerations. His memory was sketchy. At first, he couldn't remember his last name, where he lives or where he had started his bike ride that day. Over the next 45 minutes, which included the ambulance ride to the emergency room at Mercy San Juan, his memory slowly came back. An MRI concluded he did not have a concussion and he was released.

President, page 3

Complete Streets

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is proposing that Complete Streets policy be included as one of a number of Transportation Control Measures that would help the region meet air quality standards. If adopted by the SACOG board, the provision would mean that applicants for SACOG regional funding programs would need to demonstrate that the planning, design, construction and maintenance of roadway and transit facilities include the needs of all transportation users — bicyclists, pedestrians, the disabled, transit users and motorists.

SABA supports this effort and has suggested that factors affecting the operation of streets, such as signal timing and coordination, also be included. For example, Denmark has a "Green Wave" program that sets signal speeds at 20 km/hour (about 12 mph). And in Denmark, cyclists really do create a wave, with 15,000-30,000 a day on some streets.

In Complete Streets news elsewhere, legislation in Illinois was passed by the Legislature overriding the governor's veto.

At the national level, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (Sacramento) is being asked by SABA and other groups and individuals to champion Complete Streets in federal transportation legislation. While the Sacramento area has already made some progress on Complete Streets, having federal legislation would be a significant step in the growing effort to stop global warming and a major accomplishment for Matsui.

Sacramento's newest version of Complete Streets, the addition of bike lanes and slowing of traffic on 19th and 21st streets, was celebrated on Oct. 31 with a dedication and ride. SABA will be working on downtown Complete Streets in the Sacramento Central Business District in the coming months. ☘

City Completes South Area Projects

By Walt Seifert

The city of Sacramento has completed Phase III of the Stockton Boulevard Beautification Project. There are now continuous bike lanes on both sides of Stockton Blvd. from Broadway to Riza Avenue near the city limits.

The project replaced a portion of the road and added landscaped medians and tree wells in the sidewalks. In addition, new curbs, gutters, sidewalks, curb ramps that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards, driveways, traffic signal upgrades, drainage and dual left turn lanes on all four legs of the Stockton Boulevard, Elder Creek/47th Avenue intersection were constructed.

There are a large number of auto-oriented businesses along Stockton Blvd. and many ethnic restaurants and grocery stores. The project was marred by the selection of non-native, non-shade-providing palm trees for the median plantings.

The \$4 million project was funded by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Authority through a California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank loan and various other local, state and federal sources.

Phase II of the project from Broadway to El Paraiso Avenue was completed in August 2005 and Phase I was completed in 2002. Street lights were added to the entire project during Phase I. The cost for all three phases of the project total \$14 million.

The city of Sacramento also completed a \$250,000 trail between the North Laguna Creek Wildlife Area trail and the Jacinto Creek trail. The new trail, which runs for about one-quarter mile between Center Parkway and Bruceville Road, fills a gap in a larger trail network. The trail is short, but attractive, running along a small wetlands area.

Projects, page 3

SABA Mission

*SABA represents bicyclists.
Our aim is more and safer trips by bike.*

SABA Vision

*Bicycling for everyday transportation is common
because it is safe, convenient and desirable.*

SABA's Folsom Chapter, the Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates (FABA), meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. For more information, call Chapter Chair Tony Powers at (916) 353-1745 or you may e-mail FABA at faba_info@sacbike.com.

The Squeaky Wheel

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*SABA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Contributions are tax-deductible.*

SABA Actions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- SACOG Regional Planning Partnership
- 65th Street Station Area community meeting
- Second bike summit with Caltrans Director Will Kempton
- Bike Commute Month planning
- Complete Streets ad hoc group
- Neighbors Advocating Sustainable Transportation
- Sacramento City/County Bicycle Advisory Committee on Los Rios Community College bike access
- Highway 50 Corridor System Master Plan
- Franklin Boulevard Business Association
- Breathe California policy committee

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Caltrans and the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento on retaining shoulders on the Tower Bridge
- City of Sacramento on the Greenbriar project
- SACOG in support of regional bike trip planning and map grant
- SACOG in support of regional bike parking program grant
- City of Sacramento in support of a Safe Routes to School grant at Bell Avenue School
- Caltrans in support of a Regional Blueprint Planning grant for Complete Streets and other efforts
- City of Rancho Cordova on problems with the Folsom South Canal crossing of Sunrise Boulevard

Other Actions

- Completed and published on the web the Los Rios Community College bicycle access report
- Assembled lights for Light On! giveaway
- Received donation at Sacramento Bike Hikers meeting

SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff



The next monthly
SABA Volunteer Work
and Pizza Party will be
Thursday, Jan. 10 from

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA Canton HQ, 909 12th St.

If you like Hawaiian pizza you're halfway there. Come join us.

President, from page 1

As for me, X-rays confirmed a badly broken right collarbone and a broken rib. The emergency room doctor gave me the X-rays on a disk, a recommendation to see my regular physician as quickly as possible because I probably was going to need surgery, a brace to keep my right arm stable and a prescription for pain pills.

Dennis' bicycle and helmet were toast. After Dennis got a couple of estimates for replacing his bicycle, my husband, Skip, wrote a check to Dennis so he could replace his bike and helmet. We're waiting to see if our homeowner's insurance covers at least part of the cost. My bicycle appears to be fine, although I haven't ridden it yet.

Dennis, a retired state worker, and I are both lucky in that we have good health insurance. I underwent surgery during which the orthopedic surgeon installed a plate and seven screws to stabilize the right collarbone. The plate can come out in about a year if I so choose. An incident like this makes the current debate over universal health care very personal.

I'm also very lucky in that I was able to telecommute from home and ended up missing only several days of work.

By the time you read this, hopefully I'll be back riding my bike. A week after the surgery, I was cleared to ride a stationary trainer. Pedaling the trainer is helping me get back in shape, but definitely does nothing to solve my transportation challenge.

As bicycle commuters, we're not dependent on transit schedules, don't worry about traffic congestion and feel pretty smug when we pedal by a gas station. The Sunrise light rail station is just over two miles from my home, a reasonable distance to walk. The problem is that part of the route is the Sunrise Corridor Bikeway under Highway 50, which seems really remote early in the morning when it's dark in the winter.

I've never worried about the remoteness while on my bike. But walking with one arm in a sling ... that's another issue.

It just so happens that a co-worker lives around the corner and drives by my house every day. She graciously agreed to take me to and from work until I can be a bike commuter again.

I know I'll make more U-turns on the bike trail, but will most likely pull over on the decomposed granite shoulder and stop before actually making the turn ... at least for a while. ☸

Projects, from page 1

Unfortunately, the gap-filling trail still has gaps of its own at both ends. No crossing or even a paved access is provided at Bruceville Road. The landscaped median on Bruceville deters instead of assists crossing. There is no legal way for cyclists to cross the street. They can portage across high-speed Bruceville Road or ride to either Damascus Road or Sheldon Road.

At the other end of the trail, a curb cut is provided at Center Parkway. Cyclists can use a sidewalk and crosswalk to reach the North Laguna Creek Wildlife Area trail, but there is no curb cut on the west side of Center Parkway, forcing cyclists to dismount.

The three unconnected trail segments are approximately two miles long and run from Franklin Boulevard on the west to just short of Highway 99 on the east. There is no signage for any of the trails and they are hard to find. Because of the lack of con-

Tower Bridge Reopens, Shoulders Threatened

The Tower Bridge reopened to bicycle, pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic on Nov. 20. At press time, work on the sidewalk on the south side of the bridge was complete, but work on the north sidewalk was still in progress. The bridge was originally scheduled to be closed again to finish the project, but work was finished ahead of schedule and a second closure will not be needed.

Meanwhile, SABA learned that there were proposals to eliminate the shoulders on the bridge deck in order to provide exclusive right of way for possible streetcar operation. The shoulders, while not quite wide enough to qualify as bike lanes, represent a hard-fought victory by SABA to secure space on the bridge for cyclists. If the shoulders were taken away, cyclists would be forced to use the sidewalks. SABA has expressed its opposition to such a move in letters to Caltrans and the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento. Use of the widened sidewalks by cyclists should be an option, not a requirement. ☸

Thanks for Contributions

The Sacramento Bike Hikers presented a \$2,000 check to further SABA's work to SABA Executive Committee member Sue Teranishi at its November meeting. Thank you Bike Hikers!

For a second year, the Sacramento Wheelmen will be making SABA the beneficiary of a silent auction. The auction will be held in conjunction with the Wheelmen's annual banquet in January. The bike-friendly owners of the Waterboy Restaurant and the Bear Valley Inn in Olema have donated gift certificates to the auction. Thanks to all for their generosity.

And thanks to SABA members who contributed to our annual appeal. We couldn't exist without your support. If you haven't already responded to the appeal, we'd welcome your contribution. We're grateful so many people and organizations want to make SABA stronger and the world a better and safer place for cyclists. ☸

*Projects, cont.*

nectivity, it's not clear that the trails offer any advantage for most cyclists over the nearby residential streets.

On its west end, the North Laguna Creek Wildlife Area trail is being reconstructed. There is potential to extend the trail west of Franklin Boulevard through the Regional Sanitation Wastewater Treatment Plant bufferlands and the Delta Shores development project and ultimately to the Sacramento River. ☸

Transit Strike Tests Vélib

By Scott Yates

Recent press accounts focused on Paris, France's new bicycle rental system getting a workout during a transit strike last month.

Paris joined the two-wheel trend in Europe this summer after it released 15,000 bicycles to the city's streets. The three-speed bicycles equipped with wide tires, fenders and front baskets are parked at more than 1,000 docking stations throughout the city. Anyone with a credit card can access the bikes for use.

The first 30 minutes are free. After that, the cost is 1 euro, or about \$1.45, for the first half-hour; 2 euros for the second half-hour and 4 euros for each half hour after that. The pricing structure is a brilliant way to encourage use of the cycles for short trips, thereby easing traffic congestion within the city's core.

The Paris program is called Vélib, a combining of the French word for bicycle, *Velo*, and the word for liberating, *liberte*. The Vélib system is reportedly simple to use. You swipe a credit



Customer at Vélib kiosk. Photo by Dave Cassel

card in a kiosk that is located beside a row of parked bikes and purchase a one-day, one-week or one-year subscription. The system also takes a 150-euro deposit authorization to ensure the bike's safe return. The machine prints out a card with your code number, and you enter a personal password. Then, tap the code and password to unlock a bike and ride off.

Vélib is just one example of the Community Bike Movement. It was just 15 years ago when the Yellow Bike Program in Portland, Ore., gained national attention. There, a small nonprofit took 10 used bikes, painted them yellow and placed them on the



Vélib handlebars and locking post. Photo by Dave Cassel

city's streets for anybody to use. However, because of theft, all the yellow bikes eventually disappeared.

The freshness of the movement makes the public-private partnership in Paris all the more impressive. Proposals for similar programs are being considered in Chicago, Washington D.C., Portland and New York.

Maybe it's time Sacramento considers its own Community Bike Program. A factoid often recited by proud Sacramentans is that our city is second only to Paris in the number of trees per capita. Imagine a world where proud Parisians proclaim, Paris is second only to Sacramento in the number of community bikes per capita.

During the recent transit strike in Paris, record numbers of commuters fought over limited bikes and cycle stands. Rentals in Paris almost doubled during the strike, rising from an average of 90,000 bike hires a day to almost 175,000. There were reports of "Vélib rage."

For more about the Community Bicycle Movement, simply type "community bike program" into your favorite Internet search engine. ☸



Bikes Banned in Orangevale

Orangevale resident Craig Newport is not a wild-eyed radical. He just wanted to ride his 1975 JC Penney women's three-speed to his neighborhood shopping center at Hazel Boulevard and Greenback Lane. The center has a number of stores where he was a regular customer. There is a Save Mart supermarket, his favorite donut shop, a post office and half a dozen other places.

Then one day, there they were — new signs that said “NO BICYCLES.” The signs also banned skateboards, dogs, roller blades and loitering. Older signs on the property had prohibited bicycling, skateboards and rollerblading on the sidewalks.

Craig felt unwelcome, to say the least. Though not a SABA member, he did what a good advocate does and took action. He refused to be discriminated against. He refused to take NO BICYCLES as the way things should be. He talked to shop owners. He wrote shop owners and the post office. He was told the signs went up because kids were blocking doors with their bikes and ramming around the parking lot. He was told the signs didn't really apply to someone like him. Yet there they were, saying clearly NO BICYCLES.



Shopping center owners say no bikes. Photo by Craig Newport

So Craig decided to do something more. He organized a one-family (his) boycott of the shopping center. Craig said, “They don't realize the power of my boycotts. I boycotted a drive-in movie theater in southern California in 1964. Not only that theater, but almost every other drive-in in the United States is out of business. I started boycotting General Motors in 1982. They shrugged it off then, but the effects are starting to show.”

Craig also contacted the Sacramento Wheelmen inquiring if there was a bicycle advocacy group in the area and was referred to SABA. We suggested Craig write the property owners. He did and he got essentially the same response as the tenants had given him. Bad behavior by kids was the problem and the signs were a response to that.

SABA sought informal legal advice. Could the property owners do this? The answer was they could on private property. What about the notion that the county had a requirement to provide bicycle parking? How could that be consistent with a

Open Letter to Save Mart Stores

Save Mart Manager:

I have noticed the appearance of signs banning bicycles in your shopping center. I would like to know if that is your intention.

I assume that the owners of the property are putting this ban forward, but it affects your business. Admittedly, my family does not do the majority of our shopping while bicycling. We live close enough that it doesn't make sense to drive our vehicle to make small purchases so we do make some purchases this way.

I am also assuming that this ban is designed to make life easier for your landlord. It occurs to me that they could decide to ban cars and trucks. All they really want is for you to pay your rent. I'm hoping that by making bicyclists unwelcome, you will realize that you are making some of your customers unwelcome.

If I have to drive to make a small purchase, I'll drive to make the larger ones, too. I will be driving past your business and the others in this shopping center.

*Sincerely,
Craig Newport
Former Customer*

Transportation Secretary Didn't Mean It

On the Public Broadcasting System's program NewsHour with Jim Lehrer on Aug. 15, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Mary Peters claimed that trails and bike paths were not “transportation-related.”

After receiving thousands of concerned letters, Secretary Peters responded that her comments were not intended to indict bicycle and pedestrian investments broadly, but rather the processes by which transportation funds are sometimes distributed. It is, she said, U.S. DOT's belief that “bicyclists and pedestrians are legitimate and welcome users of our nation's transportation system. They are a healthy part of the solution to congestion in our urban areas.”

Secretary Peters' full response can be seen at: http://www.bikeleague.org/images/mary_peters_response_to_cyclists.pdf.

ban on bicycles? After all, the sign didn't say you could walk your bike through the center to the bike parking, it said NO BICYCLES.

SABA is following up with the county on this tack and sending a letter of its own to the property owners. The letter points out that cyclists are customers and the ban is bad for business and public relations. It also noted, “Sacramento County has requirements for bicycle parking and automobile parking. Banning bicycles at the center is equivalent to building a parking lot and then banning cars.”

We'll keep you posted on developments.

Tip of the Month Presents for Pedalers

By David Takemoto-Weerts

It's that gift-giving-and-getting season of the year! No matter what your spiritual inclinations or disinclinations may be, in December it's hard to resist the temptation to give a little more of oneself. When considering gifts, don't forget about your local bike shop as a source of goodies for your fellow cyclists. It's generally easy to shop for another avid cyclist if you have some idea as to his or her cycling preferences and interests. However, if someone on your shopping list is not a bike geek like yourself but still uses a bicycle now and then, it's not hard to think of a bike-related present that will be used, appreciated and perhaps may even encourage more riding. Consider items that make cycling easier, safer or more comfortable: gloves, lights, bright jackets or vests, tools, bells, good locks, etc. If you consider an accessory that may be a bit challenging to install, such as full fenders, a basket or rack, offer to mount it yourself. Otherwise, it may just collect dust or be "regifted." If you are mechanically inclined, consider giving a "gift card" of your services, good for a tune-up or other repair to be claimed by the recipient. Or, teach your friend how to fix a flat or make other minor roadside repairs—throw in a patch kit and pump, too. A gift card from a bike shop works, too, of course. If equipment or cycle clothing is difficult to choose for someone else, consider bike posters, calendars, books or magazine subscriptions.

Perhaps the best gift—one to please you, the recipient and the bike world at large—is a membership in your (or their) favorite bike club or bicycle advocacy organization. Association with a local, regional or national organization benefits everyone! So don't forget groups like California Bicycle Coalition, Sacramento Wheelmen, Bike Hikers, Davis Bike Club, Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates, League of American Bicyclists, IMBA, or—dare I suggest it?—the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates! Basic memberships in most such organizations are relatively cheap, and they have the potential of being "self-renewing" year after year if the recipient is made aware of the personal benefits as well as the contributions such organizations make to all of us who prefer to pedal!

Peace with Earth! Welcome Yule! ☸

David Takemoto-Weerts is the University of California, Davis, bike coordinator and a League of American Bicyclists' League Cycling Instructor.

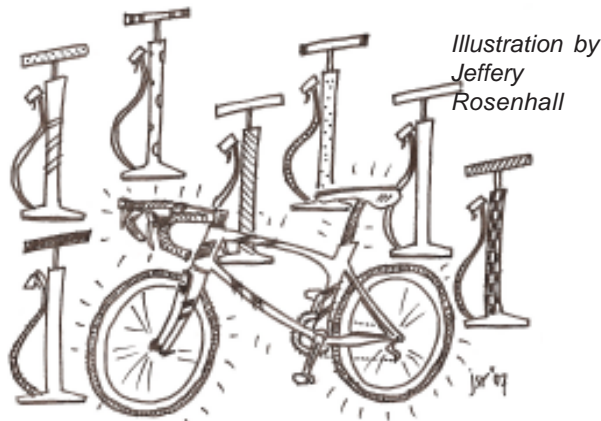


Illustration by
Jeffery
Rosenhall

It Should Be Easier

By Walt Seifert

A lot of what SABA does happens behind the scenes and doesn't get reported by us or anyone else. Often problems get fixed quickly and smoothly. Recently though, a frustrating e-mail exchange with a local city transportation official demonstrated once again why SABA is needed to steer some apparently-reluctant bureaucrats toward a better world for cyclists.

A cyclist submitted a hazard report to SABA about a signal that would not detect bikes in a city in Sacramento County. After SABA sent the report to the city, the following dialogue ensued:

City: *The city plans to upgrade all signals with bike detection when we modify the signals.* (Unstated subtext: "We aren't doing anything to fix the problem now.")

SABA: *That's good news. State legislation passed this year (AB 1581) now requires signal detection of bicyclists and motorcyclists at new and modified signals, but the requirement won't go into effect until Caltrans develops detection standards.*

In the meantime, since it might be a long time before the signal is modified, either adjusting the loop sensitivity or installing a Caltrans-authorized pavement marking showing the loop "sweet spot" might be helpful. A supplemental sign is also available. Please see section 9C.05 of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

City: *I don't see where the Caltrans-authorized pavement marking showing the loop "sweet spot" is located in the MUTCD. Increasing the loop sensitivity creates a lot of false calls.*

SABA: *The pavement marking is shown on page 9C-16 on the California MUTCD. False calls are a problem. So are no calls. These "no calls" put cyclists in a dangerous situation.*

City: *This pavement marking is for bike loops and not traffic loops.*

SABA: *That's not correct. Here is what the MUTCD says:*

Section 4D.105(CA) Bicycle Detectors

Option:

Bicycle detectors may be required at traffic-actuated signal installations. The loop detector logo shown on Department of Transportation's Standard Plan A24C may be used to show a bicyclist where to stop in a bike lane or traffic lane to be detected.

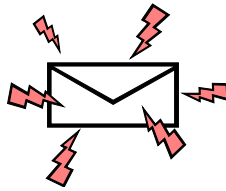
Support:

Efforts need to be made to ensure that signal detection devices are capable of detecting a bicycle. Detectors for traffic-actuated signals need to be located in the bicyclist's expected path, including left-turn lanes and shoulders. Marking the road surface to indicate the optimum location for bicycle detection is helpful to the bicyclist. Video detection is an effective alternate technique to loop detection.

City: *There was no response.* ☸

There are times when silence has the loudest voice.
Leroy Brownlow

Letters to the Editor



We want to hear from you!

Preferably e-mail your letter to: saba@sacbike.org

or mail it to: **SABA**

**909 12th Street, Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

Editor

I have been cycling in and around Sacramento for 52 years. I ride through East Sacramento, Midtown and the urban core several times each week. Over the years I have taken several spills, but I have yet to crash into a green waste pile. And, if I had a choice, I would much prefer to go down into a pile of lawn clippings and leaves than to run into a full, or even empty, green waste container. And, whether it's a leaf pile or a waste container, I still need to go into the traffic lane to avoid it.

At 70 years old, I am not about to start climbing into a green waste container and jumping up and down on the contents so I can possibly squeeze a couple more cubic feet of clippings, leaves, shrub cuttings and other yard debris into the last few inches at the top. I live in an older area of town with a well-established tree canopy. This time of year it would take two or more well-compacted containers just to hold all of the green waste, debris and leaves between scheduled pick ups. Any waste that would not fit in would need to be removed from the street and stored somewhere awaiting the next pick up cycle. We have enough ugly plastic containers on our streets already. We don't need any more!

I'll opt for "the claw," continue to watch where I am riding and, as I pedal through Sacramento's streets this time of year, will enjoy one of the many visual perks of fall in The City of Trees.

Richard Sickert

Editor

Night riding, e.g., commuting to work, could be vastly improved by placing a square or reflective sticker on the traffic approach side of the trash and recycle containers.

The cans are frequently placed away from the curb and are a real hazard to night-time bicyclists. Two or three stickers (one for each can) could be mailed to each renewing SABA member with their membership card with an explanation on their use.

Also, the city and county (at SABA's request) could incorporate the stickers on the cans prior to delivery to the homeowner.

Reflective stickers are now placed on rental dumpsters for the purpose of collision avoidance by vehicles.

Ray Poff

Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates Membership Application

Please fill in, include your check payable to "SABA," and mail to:

**SABA
909 12th Street, Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95814**

I want to be a part of an organization that is doing things for cyclists and the community.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (home): (____) _____ - _____

Phone (work): (____) _____ - _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership level:

\$1000 Legacy Club*

\$500 Leadership Circle*

\$100 Century*

\$75 Business/Group

\$75 Sustaining*

\$50 Sponsoring

\$40 Family

\$30 Individual

* Free T-shirt – indicate size below

Money's not enough! Contact me about volunteering.

I must have a SABA T-shirt! Shirts are \$15 each.

Size: S M L XL

SABA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions are tax deductible

Members, please share with a friend or acquaintance.

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Simply send an e-mail, subject "Electronic newsletter" to
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South Area Projects Completed
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-ADVENTURE CYCLING