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BICYCLE LAW



ROLLING RESISTANCE

ISSUE #5 | FALL 2022 | RIDE TIME!

TRACK BIKES, GOING CAR-FREE, LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST, AND MORE ►

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to make sure cyclists benefit from cycling-focused lawyers.

Front cover photo: Miles B. Cooper. Back cover photo: Jason Hansen.

As summer comes to an end, we at Bicycle Law examine
biking with a particular focus on track bikes, community-based
racing, back-to-school kid hauling, and urbanism. Storied
wheelman Chas Christiansen's guest piece dives into track bike
history. For anyone not familiar with Chas's exploits, a quick
video search will turn up unfathomable fixie whipping exploits.
His history is a great lead in to September 2-4's Fixed Gear
Triple Crown, a spectator-friendly San Francisco affair that will
draw some of the best in the world.

We then examine ways those in denser urban areas can
consider shedding 3,000 pounds—going from two cars to one,
or one to zero! We also look at how one neighborhood in San
Francisco is questioning road use. Are roads solely the domain
of speeding cars or should roads be safe spaces for everyone?
Hint: in this newsletter, it's definitely going to be the latter.

Finally, we take an adventure into the Los Padres National
Forest, visiting an abandoned mine and taking inspiration from
the spiritually strong.

Whether you're racing, relaxing, adventuring, or rolling slow,
we hope your fall is as fantastic as any two-wheeled fall can be.

*Hoping you keep the rubber side down,
Miles B. Cooper, Maryanne B. Cooper, Bob Mionske,
and everyone at Bicycle Law*

Dawn and a full moon over Santa Barbara.



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CHAS CHRISTIANSEN'S BRIEF HISTORY OF TRACK BIKES

By Chas Christiansen

"Fixed gear, no brakes, can't stop, don't want to either." A road-weary veteran bike messenger... or an A-list Hollywood movie character once described riding a track bike as the ultimate form of freedom. Direct drivetrain, one gear, the inability to stop, somehow this highly specific race bicycle became the weapon of choice for couriers and street cyclists around the world. Track bikes were designed to race on a banked oval track called a Velodrome (or The Track), the races went in one direction on a closed course, so gears and brakes were eschewed in favor of simplicity and speed. Long the providence of professional racers, world record attempts and glamorized "Six Day Races," at some point these bicycles made their way onto the streets.

Legend has it, it was Jamaican bike messengers in New York City who first started to ride track bikes on the streets. The simplicity of the fixed gear meant no brake pads to replace, no gears to keep lubed and running smooth, just a chain and some tires. The geometry of these bikes was (and still is) race bred, favoring lightning-quick handling, aggressive body positions, and lightweight materials over smoothness, safety, and predictability. Whoever was the first to ride track bikes on the streets will forever be debated, but it happened somewhere in NYC in the 1980s. And it wasn't until the 1996 CMWC (Cycle Messenger World Championships) in San Francisco that track bikes hit the rest of the messenger community. Previously, messengers had ridden beach cruiser bikes, mountain bikes or even road-racing bicycles. But legendary New York City messengers like Kevin "Squid" Bolger and others brought their track bikes to San Francisco in 1996 and the rest of the courier world took notice.

Cycle messenger championships were annual race events that gathered bike messengers from around the world to compete for the title of "fastest messenger in the world." Held in a different city every year, these events were week-long affairs full of drinking, debauchery, sanctioned racing, and street racing. The street races were called Alleycats: open course and unsanctioned (what some might call illegal). These free-for-all races tested not only a courier's course-routing ability, but also their skill at dodging cars and running red lights. Many a Courier Champion would cut



The author on the course at Red Hook. Photo: Roman Siromakha.

their teeth racing in the streets of their home city for years before traveling to race in a CMWC.

On a messenger's salary no-one was riding brand new bikes; everything came second hand, usually passed off from a retiring racer or bought used at a local bike shop. So, these first track bikes ridden on the streets were made of lightweight steel tubing, usually hand built by craftsmen from Europe. Names like Colnago and Campagnolo dominated the dialect; Italy had long been a bastion of cycling culture and early track bikes were dripping in slightly battered Italian chrome. Soon couriers around the world were riding track bikes at work. Berlin, London, Tokyo, every year more and more couriers showed to championship events riding FIXED. In the early 2000s Japanese bike culture rose in popularity, specifically Keirin racing. Keirin racing is much like traditional velodrome racing, with the addition of horse-race-style gambling. With the high stakes came a governing body, NJS (Nihon Jitensha Shinkokai), that regulated all the bikes and equipment used in races. NJS bike frames and components quickly became the gold standard of fixed gear bikes on the streets.



A group of messengers pose at an event, circa 2003.

As the 2000s progressed, track bikes also evolved from the provenance of strictly working bike messengers to an underground explosion of culture. From street wear brands like SUPREME, to professional skateboarders like Keith Hufnagel, to world-famous graffiti writers, everyone who was anyone rode a track bike. Hand-built Japanese NJS frames battled with chromed-out Italian steeds for dominance. Riders started to add carbon aero wheels and other road-racing performance mods, spending hundreds of dollars on discarded and abandoned (crashed) race parts for their bikes. Movies like MASH and Macaframa were instrumental in this growing fixed-gear boom. Structured like skateboarding videos, these feature-length films showcased messengers and riders in San Francisco, skillfully and with little regard for personal safety, bombing hills and darting in and around traffic. For one of the first times track bikes nudged into mainstream culture and the world took notice.

As the economic boom of the 1990s bled into the 2000s, most major cities around the world had bike messengers and alleycat races. But soon there were track bikes in smaller cities and suburban towns. Online shops made it easy for everyone to access the once-hard-to-find NJS parts from Japan. eBay was awash with hand-built Italian race frames and vintage carbon wheels. Italian legacy brand Cinelli partnered with MASH to produce new aluminum and carbon track bikes specifically suited for riding on the streets. While street racing was capturing the attention of

fixed-gear riders around the globe, the next major step forward was already taking place in New York City.

In the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn, David Trimble was searching for a way to bring his bike messenger and road racer friends together. One crew prepped for races by downing tall cans of cheap beer and puffing on joints, while the other shaved their legs and got a good night's sleep. In 2008 Trimble finally got them both together for an open-course, fixed-gear criterium. Modeled after Kermesse racing in Belgium and refined in the United States to Criteriums, this breakneck race featured multiple laps around a highly technical urban course. The first Red Hook Crit was thrown around an IKEA building, at midnight, over cobblestones and bus routes. Year after year it evolved to become one of the biggest events in cycling; riders from around the world, including professionals from Grand Tour teams, would show up to try their hand (and legs) at racing the fastest bike messengers and street cyclists to ever grace a track bike. Red Hook Criterium inspired countless other fixed-gear races around the world.

From racing fixed on the Autobahn in Germany to track bike hill climb events hosted by Red Bull in San Francisco, track bikes have evolved from a niche race discipline and blue-collar tool to a global cycling phenomenon.



Photo: Mike Martin.

About the author: Chas Christiansen (@notchas) is a Bay Area-based artist and cyclist. Traveling around the globe in search of the stoke, Chas thrives on fun, adventure, and pushing limits in bike racing, exploring, and making art.

THE FIXED GEAR **TRIPLE CROWN** — SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2022

By James Grady

In mid-summer 1976, two bearded young men walked into a room in Menlo Park and plopped several boxes of electronic equipment onto a table. Amongst their boxes were big dreams and plans to change the world. But instead of taking their electronics directly to market, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak took their creation to a meeting of like-minded technologists, the Home Brew Computer Club. Jobs and Wozniak knew if they were going to be successful, they would first have to win over the community to which they belonged. Acceptance would make or break their fledgling Apple Computer Company.

Photo: Erik Mathy | @erikmathy



As of this writing, Apple Inc. is the largest company in the world, with a market cap of \$2.379 trillion. While it's not been a straight shot to the top, we might not know of Apple today without the Homebrew Computer Club. The meetings gave people a common cause for gathering, which both created a crucible for new ideas and engendered a spirit of community. In anthropology, this spirit—or common cause felt by a group of people—is known as *communitas*. Simply put, *communitas* is the feeling of belonging to something larger than oneself.

Spectator sporting events are the perfect example of *communitas*: Whether through the joy of victory or the agony of defeat, people are joined by their shared experience. Since the earliest times, humans have organized themselves into communities; the desire to belong is hardcoded into us.

I started producing cycling events in 2014, and as interest from riders and spectators grew over the years, I came to an important realization: I wasn't producing bike races that happened to attract spectators, I was producing a community event that happened to feature a bike race. This inversion of thinking caused me to change my approach to these events; while still maintaining a high-quality race for participants, I started focusing attention on what would be most enjoyable for spectators.

And don't get me wrong, there's not a hard line between "riders" and "spectators." Even if they're not riding bikes in a race, spectators are still active participants in events. Like the technical wizards at the Homebrew Computer Club, spectators spell success or death for an event. There is a virtuous cycle between riders and spectators: The more entertaining the riders, the more it draws in the observers. As they get more invested in the race, spectators will yell, cheer, and create the positive energy that competitors feed off.

On Labor Day weekend in 2022, I will be producing my biggest event ever: the Fixed Gear Triple Crown. The main event, Mission Crit, will be joined by two new events to form a three-day, three-event omnium. The overall best-performing athletes will be crowned Fixed Gear World Champions. There will additionally be other events—a \$10k track night, an alleycat, huge parties—totaling six days of events for participants.

This is a lot of stuff, so why do it all at once? I think of this more like a music festival than individual events. Stacking events in one place

(San Francisco) at one time (September 2-4) allows people's dollars to go farther and their time commitment to be more specific (as opposed to a series that stretches across the calendar). The biggest reason, though, is because having everyone in one place at one time, sharing in experiences over multiple days—the joy of victory and the agony of defeat—supercharges *communitas*.

The specifics of the Homebrew Computer Club meetings have faded, and more important than remembering the winners and losers of the Fixed Gear Triple Crown, those who attended will talk about the excitement and joy they felt through the shared experience of *being there*.

Bicycle Law is proud to be a long time supporter of Mission Crit and a sponsor of the Fixed Gear Triple Crown.

WHAT

Fixed Gear Triple Crown

WHERE

San Francisco, CA

WHEN

September 2-4, 2022

WHY

Please see above

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About the author: James Grady is Bicycle Law's Messenger of Bike (@bicycle.law). He engages and educates the community about Bicycle Law's relentless commitment to justice for all who ride. James lives in San Francisco with his beautiful wife and rambunctious toddler.

HOW TO LOSE 3,000 POUNDS AND SAVE MONEY WHILE DOING IT!

By Miles B. Cooper

This is not about slimming down the body, but simplifying life and rethinking car ownership. "Zounds," you may think, "here we go with some tree-hugger, all-cars-are-bad zealot." Not so. When I moved to San Francisco in 2004, a condition of moving into our old (read no garage) Victorian was a leased parking space for a zippy sports car that brought me great joy. Work required occasional drives to random locations. Fast forward to 2015. Work still required occasional trips, yet I found the car sat unused most of the time.

The author with the Coopers' family "minivan." Photo: Erik Mathy | @erikmathy



That's not unusual. For most of us, our cars sit unused 95% of the time. Yet after rent or a mortgage payment, car ownership and maintenance is usually the next largest household expense. This on an item that continually depreciates. Add in the time needed to maintain a car and hunt for parking and one starts to recognize the significant impact car ownership has on one's life. At the same time, we live in a transit and resource-dense environment. This includes as-needed access to cars. Hourly car rentals like Zipcar, Getaround, Gig carshare, and Turo are immediately available. In fact, the nearest Zipcar is closer to our house than our leased parking space was. Longer-term rentals (Enterprise, Sixt, and the major agencies near Union Square) are within 20 minutes. These options provide cars on demand without the ownership cost and time.

We sold our car in 2015 and never looked back. "But I have kids," you say. So did we—ages 2 and 3. In 2016-17, we even managed a car-free cancer year filled with chemotherapy, radiation, and surgeries at Stanford for our now healthy 8-year-old. We leaned into transit and relied on a cargo bike for kid hauling. What I learned during this is while transit may take a little longer to get to Stanford, one can sit and work while doing it. I finished a train ride with a reduced email inbox instead of demands stacking while we drove in traffic congestion, getting frustrated.

The additional bike lanes, slow streets, and one-way Bay Wheels bikes add safer bicycle riding options. Couple that with the amazing advances in e-bike options to get around (and haul kids and groceries) and urban environments like the Bay Area, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, and other dense areas become open and accessible on two wheels.

Giving up a car is a huge change, and change can be scary. But for those living in transit-dense areas, now is the time to give it a try. For those willing to take the plunge, they will find life to be simpler and less expensive. The reduced carbon footprint is a bonus. Every private car gone frees up road space for the few whose lives or abilities make car ownership truly necessary.

If you're car-free curious and have concerns that you want to talk through, we'd love to brainstorm them with you. Chances are we've faced the issue in the seven years we've gone without, and we'd enjoy sharing and learning from those exploring the car-free path.

About the author: Read more of Miles B. Cooper's articles about bikes at www.bicyclelaw.com/miles-b-cooper.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

VISION: SLOW TRIANGLE — EXPERIMENTS IN URBANISM

By Miles B. Cooper

In San Francisco, there's a neighborhood loosely bounded by Market Street, Castro Street, and Waller Street known as Duboce Triangle. Within the neighborhood, along Sanchez and Noe Streets, one will find aging brick bulb-outs in various states of repair. These give Duboce Triangle a quiet neighborhood-within-a-city feel. The brick bulb-outs are not part of the current traffic-calming efforts but instead date back to the 1970s. Back then, "urban renewal" was a buzzword used to bulldoze neighborhoods, particularly ones with high densities of people of color. One only has to look to San Francisco's Western Addition and Fillmore District to see the results bulldozing established neighborhoods had—displacement, loss of character, and freeway-like roads.

Sanchez Street looking north in Duboce Triangle. Photo: Christopher Beland.



Duboce Triangle was threatened with the same urban renewal — bulldozing old Victorians to make way for freeway-like streets. The neighborhood fought back, however, and in the process won the 1970s versions of traffic calming found along Noe and Sanchez Street. Fast forward to the pandemic, slow-streets movement, and growing interest in urbanism. The net result is a rethinking of street space. Are streets the sole domain of cars and subsidized private car storage in public spaces (also known as parking) as many drivers believe? Or are they spaces owned by all, open for use by all, and open to revisiting their best uses? Many who live in busy urban environments believe the latter.

The Duboce Triangle Neighborhood Association decided that 50 years after the victory over urban renewal, it was time as an organization to examine road and sidewalk use. Partnering with UC Berkeley's Institute of Transportation Studies, DTNA did initial surveying in 2021, and in 2022 funded a graduate student intern to run community feedback meetings to help formulate a community-backed plan for Duboce Triangle. The project was given the name Vision: Slow Triangle. In doing this, the neighborhood has looked for inspiration from projects like Barcelona's superblocks, three block by three block sections where car travel is limited to those living within the neighborhood and the roads are open for all users, including children playing, people exercising, and neighbors socializing. DTNA is hopeful its work can help make the neighborhood even more livable, and like Barcelona's superblocks, become a model for U.S. neighborhoods that want to prioritize living over car traffic.

As residents of Duboce Triangle, Bicycle Law's Miles and Maryanne Cooper felt it was their obligation to provide time and financial resources to this important project to expand urbanism — the sometimes pat, "Think globally, and act locally," put into play. As a result, Bicycle Law, along with Waymo and City and County District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman's office has provided financial support for DTNA's efforts. Change requires everyone's input, and discussions about limiting car access can be tense. Nothing worth fighting for comes easy, though. We look forward to reporting on Vision: Slow Triangle's progress in coming editions and hope it will indeed be a model for others to follow.

About the author: Read more of Miles B. Cooper's articles about bikes at www.bicyclelaw.com/miles-b-cooper.

ADVENTURE MILES: TAMING NATURE

By Miles B. Cooper

In a fog

"Careful in the fog." Parting words from the night manager as I rolled my rig out the front door. Careful indeed. An unseasonable marine layer had crept in from the ocean overnight, making the cool, dark morning cooler and darker. Five a.m. With a little luck and effort, I had enough time to get up and over the Santa Ynez Mountains' first ridgeline, drop down to its namesake river, dirt explore, and climb back out for afternoon meetings.

This was my first opportunity to return to Santa Barbara since the virus changed the world. Work required I come down, so come down I did, Amtrak's Coast Starlight serving as rolling office. Amtrak's willingness to accept a bicycle fully assembled on the luggage car meant I was able to ride to the station, board, and ride away at the other end. Work also meant the Swiss Army bike, a battered old mountain bike that did not look out of place locked up outside, even if it did have a few sleeper upgrades.

I mounted up and spun the pedals. Up State Street, converted during the pandemic from a traffic sewer to an outdoor seating-laden



Mission Santa Barbara in pre-dawn darkness.

pedestrian haven. A right on Mission, and up a little hill. The ascent angle asymptotically increased as I rolled from ocean flats through mountainous precursors. As I did, the gray damp transformed to black warmth, as if passing through a thermocline.

I rounded a turn and Mission Santa Barbara itself came into view. The mission's symmetry and its architectural impact poses a dilemma when juxtaposed against the mission system's troubling indigenous subjugation.

Mission accepted

Catholicism and its internal conflicts, in an indirect way, was my Santa Barbara trip's genesis. A sisterhood, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with deep Los Angeles social justice roots, had acquired a large parcel in Santa Barbara's neighboring town of Montecito in the 1930s for the sisterhood's novitiate training and spiritual retreat. Fast forward to the late 1960s, when a reactionary Los Angeles archbishop engaged the staid yet rooted sisters in an increasingly fraught pas-de-deux. Add the artistically gifted sister, Corita Kent, who drew increasing international attention for spiritual anti-war brilliance, and a patriarchy throwdown was all but guaranteed. When the dust settled, the sisters decamped the Church—property and intellectual property in tow—to start afresh as the spiritually warm yet iron-willed Immaculate Heart Community. If this thumbnail whets your appetite for more, check out the documentary *Rebel Hearts*. One of IHC's missions continued to be the Montecito spiritual retreat center, known as La Casa de Maria.

In January 2018, following the utility-caused Thomas Fire that denuded the Santa Ynez Mountains above Montecito, heavy rains on the weakened mountainside brought the mountain down. In the early darkness, as the slurry accelerated down, massive boulders led the way, bouncing in and out of creek beds, mashing anything in their path. That included a high-pressure natural gas transmission line, buried under San Ysidro creek. Next came the mud and rock itself, sluicing across the alluvial plain. Gas-perfused mud ignited, along with a fireball that lit the night sky. When the rumbling stopped, 23 people were dead, countless injured, hundreds homeless, and a community permanently altered.

La Casa de Maria, adjacent to San Ysidro creek, was buried. Fast forward almost four years, and the utility company wanted access to the retreat



Mine turnoff sign to Forest Route 5N18 along Gibraltar Road.

center so its team of experts could pick apart the repair estimates. Hence my trip, as one of Immaculate Heart's counsel, guiding them through another asymmetric conflict. But if they successfully stood up to a 2000-year-old patriarchy, what chance did a utility company have?

Pride cometh

Thinking about the Sisterhood's strength under pressure got me well into the Gibraltar climb proper, the pre-dawn sky reddening. In the dark, partway up a blue-ribbon climb, no-one else around, I momentarily felt a little too impressed with myself. A solitary headlight caught up to me, another cyclist passing as if I were in slow motion. She uttered a clipped hello before she was out of sight. Some who strive find tension between challenge and pride. The fates tend to help by serving up a healthy dollop of humility whenever pride takes the lead.



The access road to the Sunbird Quicksilver Mine apparently used to be passable.

I watched the rider's flashing red taillight disappear and reappear around turns higher and higher as she bounded up the mountainside. Gibraltar's a long, exposed climb. It was not my first time up, however. That had been a couple years prior as I explored the Thomas Fire's burn scar and the watershed. On that journey I encountered snow patches, unusual for the area. But what was usual weather now? Historic droughts followed by historic rains. As humans attempt to mold the earth to their purposes, we increasingly unbalance matters. Nature's responsive oscillations will eventually rebalance the planet. We humans just might not be around to see it. Humility served as Last Rites.

Dark thoughts were difficult to maintain as dawn's light turned the monochromatic landscape into technicolor brilliance. The pedals spun. The summit came into view. I was thankful to have full light for the next evolution. As Gibraltar Road crossed East Camino Cielo, it became a gated fire road and a ripping descent into the Santa Ynez River basin. It was here that the slow-climbing Warthog, my wide-tired, flat-barred old school rigid mountain bike, shone. Elevation gains eked out pedal stroke after pedal stroke disappeared in minutes, a mile-wide grin pasted across my face. As I got lower and closer to Gibraltar Dam, I kept a lookout for an old wooden sign, along with a road and gate to the right. This turnoff led to the abandoned Sunbird Quicksilver Mine, a five-mile out-and-back foray.

Extraction industry

Whether it is called cinnabar, quicksilver, or mercury, the rendered element serves a purpose. That purpose was significant in gold extraction, as mercury combines into an amalgam with small pieces of gold in sediment and soil, making it easier to gather. The mercury is then vaporized. As the California Gold Rush boomed, so did related industries (just ask Levi Strauss). Gold mining begat mercury demand, and thus meta extraction's quicksilver mines. Sunbird Quicksilver Mine opened in the 1860s, when a prospector determined the red rock likely contained quicksilver. The red ore was crushed and heated in furnaces, with pure mercury being condensed off. Healthy work for the upward of 400 people who worked the mine at its peak.

The mine ceased operations a long time ago but remained a permitted mining inholding within Los Padres National Forest until the mine owners failed to renew their permit in 1991. Now, the abandoned site sits fenced

off, above Gibraltar Dam, near the end of a forest service access road. Or at least it is called a road by the forest service. Judging by its condition, nothing beyond hikers and ambitious bicyclists have used it lately. The out-and-back included the roughest conditions on the ride and a surprisingly punishing descent and climb. For those interested in decaying industrial infrastructure, the trip does not disappoint, however.

It seems curious that a mercury mine and tailings would be left in this state near the shore of a municipal water system dam, but commissioned studies seem to find it perfectly safe. No one in Santa Barbara seems to be suffering from mercury poisoning, anyway. After poking around and a quick snack, I mounted up and headed back toward the dam itself.

Remaining mine buildings and Warthog.



Water and power

California's coastline provides spectacular living, with a catch. Water is scarce. Santa Barbara approached this issue in part by damming the Santa Ynez River. Gibraltar Dam provides both water and hydroelectric power, but the dam is silting up. Not surprising given the savagely steep and sandy mountains lashed by strong winter rains. These rains seem increasingly less predictable, leading to extreme drought conditions on one hand and deluges like the one triggering January 9, 2018's debris flow on the other.

There was no rain in sight on this 85-degree day. The dirt road rose to meet me, throwing rollers instead of lazing along the Santa Ynez River itself. Not being an engineer, I presumed the distance from the river

Gibraltar Dam stores drinking water and generates power.



protected the road from being inundated during winter storms. After a time, the dirt ended at a gate and Red Rock trailhead parking area. Thence began a rollicking paved descent, paralleling the Santa Ynez River. Just before the Rancho Oso RV Park was a sharp left, back onto the dirt, on Forest Route 5N20. Here began the final big push to get back up and over the ridgeline separating the river valley from the coast. Whether it was the grade, the heat, or the miles already ridden, I found myself walking sections.

Turning right, I got back on pavement, rolling along East Camino Cielo until it reached Painted Cave Road, where I made a left. Time to descend. As I did, I passed the road's namesake, the cave's entry barred off to keep people from adding their own artistic interpretations to the ancient Native American pieces. Called Alaxuluxen by the Barbareño Chumash, the cave can be explored virtually at www.cyark.org/projects/chumash-painted-cave/in-depth.

The twisting descent finally brought me to the flatter oceanfront plains of Santa Barbara, where I worked my way, primarily along Modoc Road, back to the hotel. The final section was uneventful, and I was beat. As I rolled along the last few miles, once again surrounded by cars and houses, I thought about our impact on our environment. Extreme weather events were now becoming commonplace. Our extraction industries have led many to tremendous wealth and comfort, yet we now may be at a tipping point where that comfort will end.

Epictetus, the Greek Stoic philosopher, taught us that if we seek to control the uncontrollable, we consign ourselves to misery. Can we control the climate? No. But we can influence it if we control ourselves. I can control myself, but I cannot control my neighbor. Through one's efforts though, one can influence those around us. We should strive for small footprints with large impacts. Taking inspiration from organizations like Immaculate Heart, we can see how a few iron-willed people can turn the tide. With enough interlinking efforts, we have the capacity to effect change. Will it be enough to alter our direction? Perhaps. Perhaps not. But the challenge itself is worth the undertaking.

About the author: Read more of Miles B. Cooper's articles about bikes at www.bicyclelaw.com/miles-b-cooper.

CONSIDERING THE ROUTE?



Weather: It gets hot in the river valley in the summer, and can snow along the ridge in the winter.



Water: Bring a water filter, Steri-Pen, or iodine. The only water is river water for the majority of the ride, but if you ask nicely (or look deathly), the Rancho Oso RV Park folks may let you fill a bottle.



Communications: Cell service is not available in much of the Santa Ynez River Valley, and there aren't many people in the back country. A satellite communicator like a Garmin InReach gives one some security with satellite texting and an emergency help button. Downloading an offline version of the region through Google Maps also provides user-friendly navigation without cellular connection.



Bike/tires: I used a rigid mountain bike with a good climbing ratio. Tires were 2.2" fast-rolling knobbie Rene Herse Fleecer Ridges. These were great for everything but the mine out-and-back, where even a fatbike would have trouble in a few sections.



Options and add-ons: Los Padres National Forest backcountry is beautiful and endless. Those wanting to turn this into a bikepacking trip would be well rewarded. Amtrak's Coast Starlight or the Pacific Surfliner take bikes fully assembled and the route is easily accessed from the Santa Barbara train station.



Strava link: The ride and .gpx file can be found here: www.strava.com/activities/6331318433

