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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

This is a newsletter prepared by lawyers to advise bicyclists about the joys of riding, bicycle safety, active transportation, and cyclists' rights. Bicycle Law is owned and operated by Coopers LLP, which has lawyers licensed in California, Oregon, and Washington state. Coopers LLP is regularly consulted by attorneys and cyclists nationwide on strategy related to bicycle crashes.

BICYCLE LAW



ROLLING RESISTANCE

ISSUE #14 | WINTER 2026 | THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

BIKE SHOP & CLUB PROTECTION, SMSW RECAP, GRAVEL SOCIAL, AND MORE ►



Have you or someone you know been involved in
a bicycle crash? Want to know about your rights?

Are you a lawyer handling a bicycle crash who
wants the best result for your client?

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Bicycle Law's lawyers practice law through Coopers LLP, which has lawyers licensed in California, Oregon, and Washington state, and can affiliate with local counsel on bicycle cases across the country to make sure cyclists benefit from cycling-focused lawyers.

Front and back covers: Action from the 2025 Supermarket
Street Sweep. Photos: Erik Mathy / @erikmathy

This issue is all about navigating the road less traveled—both literally and figuratively. We're excited to share stories of adventure, essential guidance for the cycling community, and a little internal fun.

On the adventure front, Miles recounts his experience at the Gravel Social, a three-day, fully supported ride and campout in California's spectacular Lost Sierra. Get a taste of the off-grid camaraderie and breathtaking terrain.

We dive into our initiative to provide consulting and legal guidance for cycling clubs, bike shops, and events. Learn how to mitigate risks and protect the community stewards who make cycling so engaging.

Writer and rider Zachary Morvant explores the age-old question: "To chamois, or not to chamois?" Find out why some ultra-distance cyclists swear by the "no chamois, no problems" approach, and which method might be right for your ride comfort and longevity.

Speaking of Miles and Zach, after years of one being mistaken for another, we've prepared a quick-reference MAMIL* identification tool in advance of the upcoming Grasshopper Adventure Series to help spot the difference between two of Bicycle Law's familiar faces at events. (Hint: one's a tad faster than the other, as past articles can attest.) We also have our regular roundup of these, and hope to see you at some of them.

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



*Middle-aged male in lycra

CYCLING CLUB, BIKE SHOP, AND EVENT SERVICES

By Miles Cooper

How about a consult *before* one needs lawyers, guns, and money? At Bicycle Law, we recognize that cyclists generally don't want to pursue cases against the clubs, shops, and events that make our community so engaging. But sometimes things happen (Spectrum Ride lawsuit, anyone?) Best to have those ducks in a row. That's where we come in. We've sued just about everything that walks or crawls at one time or another (definitely an exaggeration but we'll drop an *Unforgiven* reference any time we can). That gives us perspective.

Local bike shops are clutch for cohesive cycling communities.
Photo: Zachary Morvant / @zmorvant



Do we charge for this? Yes. Primarily because one gets what one pays for when it is free. But the cost is negotiable, down to a token depending on the type of organization or event. Our primary goal is to make sure risks are mitigated. We don't want folks hurt. Not on the bike. Not on a club board. Not running a business. Nor running a race. So reach out to us to see if we can help on anything below.

Protection for cycling clubs

Cycling clubs provide some of the best ways to learn more about the sport, group riding etiquette, the different disciplines of bike racing, the finer points of equipment, and a whole lot more. Not to mention the obvious: meeting like-minded folks.

How do you run a fun, enjoyable club with rides and competition, while also following best safety practices? Talk to us. We'll help you:

- Set up a solid waiver and/or review your current one
- Establish clear club rules, officer roles, and a robust code of conduct
- Walk you through potential risks associated with various club activities and scenarios
- Evaluate insurance stack and potential risks



Cycling clubs provide some of the best ways to learn more about the sport. Photo courtesy of Major Taylor East Bay Cycling Club.

Protection for bike shops

We believe that knowledgeable local bike shops (or LBS if you're in the know) are clutch for cohesive cycling communities. As the industry has shifted to online ordering and vertical integration, running a local shop has become more and more difficult (but they are oh so important, so shop local!). Running a business with tight margins and long days can mean bigger picture issues like risk and one's insurance stack can become less important—until it is needed. As a firm that has seen what happens when inattentive maintenance leads to critical injuries, we can help identify risk and mitigate against it. To that end, we offer shops actionable advice, including:

- Insurance stack assessment
- Standard of care analysis including bike release and bolt-check processes
- Waiver review for shop rides

Events

Whether it is a race, an adventure ride, or a group event, it is important to make sure certain parameters are in place. Waivers, insurance, risk mitigation, safety recommendations, and a safety plan are all helpful steps. If you're running an event and want a best practices review, please reach out so we can help!

Contact us at info@bicyclelaw.com to learn more about our services.



You can run a fun, enjoyable club while also following best safety practices.
Photo courtesy of Alto Velo Racing Club.

GRAVEL SOCIAL: CAMPING AND CAMARADERIE IN THE LOST SIERRA

By Miles Cooper

Three days of riding in the Lost Sierra, with some camping mixed in yet full support on the food front? Sounded perfect. That's the idea behind the Gravel Social, an open invitation event happening every June. Starting in Truckee, one drops bags, rides north to Portola, adventures the next day in the surrounding area, and then travels back on a different route the following day. This is the brainchild of Forest Baker and his spouse, Annie, who built and run Beckwourth Peak High Camp outside Portola, California. The off-grid camp, a mixture of yurts, modern cabins, and campsites, serves as home base during the Gravel Social.





Post-ride relaxing. Photo courtesy of Beckwourth Peak High Camp.

For those who know and ride Truckee, Tahoe, and Lost Sierra dirt, Forest Baker is no stranger. An accomplished bikepacking racer, he and spouse Annie settled into Truckee. As folks who cannot seem to sit still, they also run the Bones to Blues ultra event around Tahoe and Truckee. Forest has also worked with others to develop and make a variety of dirt routes more easily accessible for those wanting to adventure in the area, including venturing up to Lassen on dirt, via Revopath.com. Forest and Annie's efforts to help build the greater bike community warrant attention, so thanks for the diversion. If you're headed that way and don't know where to ride, they'll point you in the right direction.

I heard about this event from longtime riding friends who had been there the year before. I've had the good fortune to have two neighbors who are well-matched in cycling pace and temperament. They spoke highly of their experience the year prior, so how could I say no? We woke early the morning of the first ride and met in a parking lot near the Truckee airport. Forest loaded our camping gear into his van. A bonus for this trip: no gear hauling. The group of roughly 20 riders set out, heading north

before joining the Truckee river path. After following the path a ways, we crossed north and spent the day on a mixture of fire road, empty rural road, and some single track.

The fire roads rose and fell, eventually dumping us at the south edge of the Sierra Valley, near Loyalton, where we stopped for lunch. Loyalton, formerly Smithneck, raised so much money for the Union during the Civil War the town ultimately changed its name. After a hefty deli sandwich we set off again, first by road, then path. This is where Forest's local knowledge kicked in. Rather than work our way along rural blacktop (which would have also been beautiful) we made an abrupt left onto unmarked dirt double track. What most would have mistaken for a ranch driveway was actually a hidden right-of-way between adjoining properties. We bobbed and weaved along this before crossing a bridge over one of the numerous waterways.

Gravel camp! Photo courtesy of Beckwourth Peak High Camp.





The Sierra Valley is part of the Pacific Flyway, the great migratory bird path between Alaska and Patagonia. As we neared the northwestern end of the valley, we rode past the Sierra Valley Preserve and Nature Center. A good bottle and bathroom stop, and an even better docent moment. If you've begun your slow, sad descent into becoming a birdwatcher (an Atlantic magazine reference that unfortunately hits a little too close to home), the center is fantastic.

Topped off, we pushed on to the edge of Portola, California, and the climb to the High Camp. A brief word here. As I've gotten older and had a few crashes—all my own fault—I've grown more conservative. The 2-4 month recoveries that have followed my crashes have made me more interested in sustainable riding than pushing my limits. Thus my tolerance for clipped in single track has waned. Now back to our story. The final push into camp involved some single track. Most riders surfed it like it was no problem. I had one of my moments though where despite all my zen efforts I found myself acting like a ragey baby. That day my guru showed up in disguise as narrow pine needled trails carved into a mountainside.

We arrived in camp and were greeted with cold beverages (including delicious NA beer for those on the low and no imbibing spectrum). I set up my tent, dinner was served, a campfire was lit, and we recounted our adventures.

The next morning we were served hot breakfast and given a rider's briefing. The day's route was a lollipop. Westward with a big climb up to Gold Lake via Frazier Creek, an optional addition to the Mills Peak fire lookout, over to Graegle, lunch at The Brewing Lair and back to camp. The group took off in a solid paceline along the valley, then broke up as we hit the climb. We opted to make the trip up to the fire lookout, which was well worth the effort. The road descent down from Gold Lake was a screamer (Strava told me it was my fastest average 10k at 41 mph.) We then bopped along to the brewery, which is a destination unto itself with food and music on the weekends.

As folks continue to get priced out of primary locations like Tahoe and Truckee, the area known as the Lost Sierra has become the Found Sierra (reference to the Lost and Found gravel race intended). While many decry change, the benefit for cyclists who ride dirt has been profound. The Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship has ambitiously undertaken to connect Tahoe, Plumas, and Lassen communities by bike trail. This public land stewardship program creates joy and economic opportunity for rural



U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey Marker. Photo: Miles Cooper / @milesbcooper



"A rare selfie from your humble author."

communities willing to embrace the two-wheeled type.

We finished our ride with ice cream bars in Portola before taking on the short climb back to High Camp. Another splendid dinner, campfire, and night under the stars.

The next morning was the last day. We broke camp and loaded the gear into the van, which we would meet back in Truckee. Forest gave the riders' briefing while we ate. His understated manner in describing the day's singletrack start led me to opt for

a solo road journey. As the others struck out on single track, I descended into Portola. The crisp morning saw me doing roughly 25 miles of road therapy, which felt great. Despite two days of riding I found myself ripping across the Sierra Valley toward our rendezvous point in Sierraville. I rode my titanium Firefly, a 50th birthday present to myself. Its geometry is fantastic for both gravel and road. Even with knobby 48s (Rene Herse Oracle Ridge, endurance casing, for the detail folks) the bike rolled quickly along the tarmac.

I had a languorous second breakfast in Sierraville waiting for the singletrackers to arrive. A few more road miles, then a long dirt climb and adventures across ridgelines before arriving at Truckee's outskirts. While Truckee has done an amazing job improving bicycle infrastructure, there are still some unavoidable stroads. We danced with speed limit plus SUVs for a mile or so (albeit with a wide shoulder) before cutting back to our starting point. We loaded our bikes and drove over to Alibi Ale Works' Public House in Truckee. We fueled up, shared some final stories, grabbed our bags from the van, and headed home!

IS THAT MILES OR ZACH?



They both have goatees. They both frequently wear green. They both love Bob’s Donuts (old fashioned, please). With all the similarities between these two MAMILs, it can be easy to mistake one for the other. To help you avoid a faux pas when you see either of them at upcoming events, we’ve made an easy guide.

KNOW YOUR BICYCLE LAW REP	
Miles	Zach
Facial hair: salt and pepper	Facial hair: salt and ginger
Profession: lawyer	Profession: writer and rider
Gives MCLEs*	Gets FKTs**
Conducts depositions	Practices aero position
Passed the bar	Last seen at a bar
Usually in bed by 8	Sometimes awake for 2 days straight
Low carb	Mo’ carb!
Zero tattoos	Many questionable indelible decisions
Leg hair, don’t care	“Smooth is fast”

* Minimum Continuing Legal Education, an annual requirement for lawyers.
** Fastest Known Times, the record for a given course.



Learn to spot the differences before Grasshopper season starts! 13



RESULTS

(drum roll please)



4,800

lbs of food
donated



\$11,290

fundraised



141

racers



29

volunteers



500+

tacos eaten

SUPERMARKET STREET SWEEP **RECAP**

Was it the glorious weather? Was it the SNAP cuts threatening to starve our community? One thing is for certain: the 18th edition of the Supermarket Street Sweep saw the biggest turnout and donations since its pre-pandemic heyday. Our team here at Bicycle Law and Coopers LLP couldn't be more proud.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who donated, fundraised, raced, and volunteered this year. At a time when our at-risk neighbors needed it most, you all stepped up to make a difference.

The event's beneficiary, the SF-Marin Food Bank, does great work all year. Visit their website (www.sfmfoodbank.org) if you ever want to donate or volunteer.

Missed out? Join us next year!
Watch supermarketstreetsweep.com
or our Instagram for updates.



Photos: Erik Mathy / @erikmathy

EVENTS, RIDES, AND GOINGS-ON

Clip in to some fun with friends. We've included a list of cycling events that we enjoy (and happen to support). Flavors include group and recreational rides, road races, mixed terrain adventures, and more. For more details, check out the organizers' websites or social media channels.

- Alto Velo Racing (altovelo.org)
- Fat Cake Club (fatcake.cc)
- Grasshopper Adventure Series (grasshopperadventureseries.com)
- Velo Promo (velopromo.com)



A charging peloton at Huffmaster. Photo courtesy of Grasshopper Adventure Series.



FEBRUARY

- Feb 1:** Velo Promo Early Bird Training Criterium | *Livermore, CA*
- Feb 2:** Fat Cake Club WTFNB + Allies ride ☕🥞 | *San Francisco, CA*
- Feb 7:** Alto Velo Saturday rides p/b Bicycle Law | *Palo Alto, CA*
- Feb 14:** Velo Promo Cantua Creek Road Race | *Coalinga, CA*
- Feb 15:** Velo Promo Pine Flat Road Race | *Piedra, CA*
- Feb 22:** Velo Promo Copper Valley Circuit Race | *Copperopolis, CA*
- Feb 26:** Fat Cake Club city loop ending at Breadbelly ☕🥞 | *San Francisco, CA*
- Feb 28:** Grasshopper Adventure Series #2: Huffmaster | *Maxwell, CA*
- Feb 28:** Velo Promo Snelling Road Race | *Snelling, CA*

MARCH

- Mar 1:** Velo Promo Original Merced Criterium | *Merced, CA*
- Mar 2:** Fat Cake Club WTFNB + Allies ride ☕🥞 | *San Francisco, CA*
- Mar 7:** Alto Velo Saturday rides p/b Bicycle Law | *Palo Alto, CA*
- Mar 22:** Velo Promo Santa Cruz Classic Criterium | *Santa Cruz, CA*
- Mar 26:** Fat Cake Club city loop ending at Breadbelly ☕🥞 | *San Francisco, CA*
- Mar 28:** Grasshopper Adventure Series #3: King Ridge | *Duncans Mills, CA*

APRIL

- Apr 4:** Alto Velo Saturday rides p/b Bicycle Law | *Palo Alto, CA*
- Apr 4:** Velo Promo Copperopolis Road Race | *Milton, CA*
- Apr 6:** Fat Cake Club WTFNB + Allies ride ☕🥞 | *San Francisco, CA*
- Apr 25:** Grasshopper Adventure Series #4: Jackson Forest | *Caspar, CA*
- Apr 25:** Velo Promo Leesville Gap Road Race | *Williams, CA*
- Apr 30:** Fat Cake Club city loop ending at Breadbelly ☕🥞 | *San Francisco, CA*

☕🥞 = Coffee and pastries on us!

TO CHAMOIS OR NOT TO CHAMOIS?

By Zachary Morvant

A quick disclaimer: while we've placed this story under our "Safety" column, it's a bit more about health (which is arguably related). That said, none of this is medical advice—simply an exploration of two different approaches to comfort and longevity on the bike. I'm not a doctor. Nor am I a lawyer. I'm not quite sure why I'm here, to be honest. (Editor's note: Because Zach's spent too much time on the saddle learning tough lessons about what that can do to an underside.) Anyway, enjoy!

To chamois, or not to chamois, that is the question: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous saddle sores, or to take arms against a sea of friction, and by opposing, end them?

Thank you, I'll see myself out.

For those of us who regularly don lycra and perch on carbon-railed saddles, there seems to be little debate: when you're training or racing, you wear bibs or shorts that have an integrated chamois pad. However, as someone who's gone down the rabbit hole of bikepack and ultra distance racing, it's hard to ignore the "no chamois, no problems" camp. While intrigued by their arguments, I'll admit I haven't given it a try. Perhaps I'm stuck in my ways. (Or I hate the feeling of my leg warmers slipping off.)

Let's take a look at the reasons why cyclists wear a chamois in the first place—and then explore the path less padded. But first, a quick etymology lesson, because I thought it was interesting.

Why's it called a chamois, anyway?

If my internet research is to be believed (no, I didn't entrust AI with this task), cyclists in the early 1900s needed an additional layer of protection when riding on hard saddles. The solution was using leather made from the chamois, a species of goat-antelope native to the mountainous regions of Europe and Western Asia. Leather pads were stitched into their wool shorts et voila! The chamois pad was born.



Sometimes comfort equals performance. Photo: Jeff Vander Strucken.

Why should we wear one, and how do they work?

One might quickly ascribe this to the many other seemingly inane traditions cyclists follow. Which, fair; there are plenty of those. Yet the primary reasons to pad up are very real: preventing friction and chafing, managing moisture, and relieving pressure.

Friction is reduced by the chamois's soft, seamless construction. The tightness of the attached shorts keeps the pad and fabric from moving around too much, minimizing the tiny movements that can cause chafing and saddle sores.

Moisture is managed by the ability of the chamois material to wick perspiration away from the skin. Additionally, modern pads have antimicrobial treatments to prevent bacterial buildup—crucial to preventing game-ending saddle sores and skin infections over long rides.

Pressure relief is perhaps the most obvious benefit of a good chamois. A well-made one is thin but dense in all the right spots, directly supporting one's sit bones (or "ischial tuberosities" if you want to dazzle your friends with anatomical lingo).

Despite all the claims about chamois pads, they're not a silver bullet for everyone. Many riders (myself included) also find the need to regularly apply chamois cream (and perhaps re-apply mid-ride on a long enough day) to prevent any painful bumps from developing.

The path less padded

To certain folks in the bikepacking and commuter set, a chamois is more trouble than it's worth: when you're riding self-supported for days on end, chamois pads can get gross and be very difficult to clean.

Lael Wilcox—perhaps the world's most famous self-supported ultra-endurance cyclist—focuses on having a good saddle, good hygiene, and high-quality, seamless wicking underwear. This sentiment has been echoed in articles across the internet.

Saddles are a highly personal thing. If you've ever treated yourself to a professional bike fit (which I believe is one of the best investments you can make for both performance and injury prevention), you've gotten a taste of just how different everyone's saddle interface (where your butt meets the seat) can be. Sit bone width, optimal saddle angle, reach, and many other variables come into play when choosing a saddle—so choosing the right one may require some effort and testing. But when you find The One, damn is it a game changer.

Cleanliness is non-negotiable for the chamois-free rider, especially since you're without the antimicrobial properties of the pad. Wash your underwear and saddle area with soap and water, then let them dry completely, ideally daily on multi-day tours. Some riders also like to use talcum powder or cornstarch before a ride to absorb residual moisture and reduce friction.

On the underwear front (or should I say bottom?) seamless merino wool is highly regarded. It does a great job of managing moisture, dries

reasonably fast, and has natural antimicrobial properties. As for what you wear over them? Shorts or pants with gusseted crotches are one way to go, particularly for commuters, since they remove the bulky seam that runs down the middle. Other folks go with mountain bike-style baggy shorts, which are great for breathability. The downside I've seen is that they won't do anything to hold up your leg warmers (if the temperature drops and you throw some on).

Which will you choose?

Frictionless, aerodynamic performance, or robust simplicity and self-reliance? I'll admit to being intrigued by the latter, but still stuck in my ways of the former (if it ain't broke, don't fix it, eh?). Maybe as I attempt more multi-day events this year I'll change my tune. Whichever you choose, may the joy of your ride never be interrupted by the torment of an unwelcome saddle sore.



Get your regular dose of Bicycle Law
bicycling joy on Instagram: [@bicycle.law](https://www.instagram.com/bicycle.law)

