

ipmba



news

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICE MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

IPMBA: PROMOTING AND ADVOCATING EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY BICYCLISTS.

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IPMBA: An Incredible Journey!

by **Maureen Becker**
Executive Director

Have you ever started pedaling with just a short ride in mind, and before you know it, you've traveled much further than you ever expected? And when you look back on your journey, you marvel at the distance you have covered, and what you have encountered and accomplished along the way?

That analogy sums up my career with IPMBA. When I accepted the position of Executive Director in mid-2000 (after having been recruited by then-IPMBA President Kirby Beck), I could not have anticipated the adventures that awaited or the longevity of my tenure. After all, I was 10 years out of college and to date had not settled into a position for longer than three years. I was sure that I was destined to move along within a similar period of time.



Little did I know that my tenure would span more than two decades. What a ride it has been! I have met incredible people, traveled to unexpected places, and witnessed the camaraderie and solidarity of the public safety community. As an "outsider", I did not know what to expect, but

I found myself welcomed, embraced, respected, and accepted.

As rewarding as it has been to support IPMBA's mission and members, the time for change has come for both me and the organization. I am proud of what we have accomplished together, that we have weathered the COVID-19 storm, and that we are poised for future success.

It is with both excitement and trepidation that I have informed the Board of my intention to step aside, effective July 31, 2024. I am ready for someone with fresh ideas, different perspectives, and abundant energy to seize the handlebar and steer IPMBA in new directions.

I remain committed to IPMBA and will support the Board and Transition Committee as they identify the strategic priorities that will enable them to recruit my successor. I will do my best to ease that person's transition into the role and set their wheels in motion. At the same time, I will continue to support you by ensuring IPMBA's ongoing operations and maintenance of its existing programs and processes.

Many of you have referred to me as the "hub" that holds IPMBA together, but even a well-maintained hub needs to be replaced from time to time in order for the wheel to keep on turning.

What you as public safety cyclists do in service and sacrifice to your communities has always been an inspiration to me. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you for so long and I look forward to seeing what lies ahead, around the bend in the road.

I hope to see and celebrate with you in Bentonville, Arkansas, June 24-29, 2024!

A Veteran's Dark Lifetime Gift

by **J. Mark Jackson**, *The Washington Post*

This Op-Ed appeared in the November 10, 2017, issue of the Washington Post.

Ed.'s Note: This was submitted to IPMBA by a combat veteran with the request that we publish it so it could help other veterans (and first responders) as it helped him when it was given to him by the physician who diagnosed his PTSD. Every month is PTSD Awareness Month.

J. Mark Jackson served in the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division in the war in Afghanistan in 2009.

Thank you for your service. Veterans are grateful for these words. But for the combat veteran, there is an unspoken, inaudible phrase that follows: And for your continuing sacrifice.

The experience of war, of direct combat, is trauma. It leaves a psychological residue on each veteran; call it mental plaque. Veterans

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Seasons Change, People Change



Growing up, I lived in a small town. The sign at the city limits still reads "Population 778". My family had lived there for generations, and I can recall stories about our great-grandparents raising peanuts just outside of town.



Threshing Peanuts in Aubrey, 1922 (Peipelman)

That was winter. Fast forward to this past summer. With more than 47 days above 100 degrees (37 Celsius), it ranked the 7th hottest of all time in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Stock tanks (small ponds that livestock go to and drink) dried up and just a small spark could ignite a grass fire destroying acres and acres.

The extreme heat seemed to be bearing down on every living organism in the DFW metroplex. If there was moisture in the air, it would be humid and miserable. Any attempt to work outside would elicit multiple changes of clothing. When the moisture was gone, the wind would blow like a dry furnace and your clothes would be hot to the touch.

We had a pretty good drought this year, but rain falls after every drought. Seasons come and seasons go, but sometimes we get so focused on where we are at "this moment" that we don't realize it's only a season. Times will change.

I look in the mirror and see that I am now a grandparent. I look at our parents; they look as if they are our grandparents. We live in the here and now and don't always realize that we have aged. It's hard to slow down, take a look at ourselves, and appreciate where we have come from. Oh my, how we changed!

Three decades ago, a small group of officers banded together in a hotel restaurant and formed the International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA). Since that time, IPMBA has experienced many transitions. Some were small; others were monumental. None of these transitions could have occurred without forethought, growth, and embracing new ideas.

Transition is defined as an evolution, progression, transformation, metamorphosis, or realignment. All of these signal a growth – or a change – from the present condition.

Maintaining a vision and focusing on the future has never been more important. IPMBA's vision of providing comprehensive training programs has never wavered.

It will continue while evolving with the times.

Now, as in the past, and will be in the future, the board is committed to this vision.

The backbone of this organization are the many volunteers who have given their time, money, and passion to carry out a vision that has enabled IPMBA to flourish into an organization that has trained tens of thousands of public safety professionals.



Downtown Aubrey in 1910

Far too many individuals have been involved in this process to ever mention them all. However, few people have contributed more to the stability of this organization than Maureen Becker. She has seen this organization through so many transitions during her almost 24 years as Executive Director.

It is with deep regret that we announce that Maureen has decided to transition into a new season. She has been instrumental in carrying out the vision of IPMBA's board and its founding members for more than two decades. She has truly been committed to this organization and will continue to serve you, our members, throughout this transition.

A committee has been formed and is diligently working to identify a successor who will transition IPMBA into the next phase of its life. The board will provide more information as it becomes available.

Until next time,



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THE BOARD ISSUE

Our dedicated Board of Directors have been asked to come out from behind the scenes and share information about topics near and dear to their hearts. These individuals volunteer their time and experience to ensure that IPMBA maintains its status as the premier organization for public safety cyclists. Asked only to write an article about the public safety cycling-related topic of their choice, they selected subjects that are as varied and interesting as the board members themselves. Welcome to our annual "Board Issue". Pages 5-12.

Goonies Never Say Die!

by Thomas Zermeno, PCI #1390T-B EMSCI #412T-B

Norman (OK) Police Department
IPMBA Board Member (Education)

"Hey you GUYYYYYYS!!!"
Remember this famous quote from yet another of my favorite movies, *The Goonies*? This 1985 movie reminds us what it means to be a friend, or "Goonie". This is what IPMBA means to me. I am an IPMBA Goonie. Once you join, you become one of us. You may quote Andy when the Goonies were in the wishing well and Troy dropped down the bucket: "I'm not a Goonie! I wanna go home." We all know how that ended up, don't we? In case you don't remember, she became a Goonie. It's contagious.



IPMBA "Goonies" Christopher Masters, Rance Okada, and John Herrera

Being a part of IPMBA is like being a Goonie. No matter how your first exposure to the organization occurs, IPMBA becomes a part of you and you it. It might not start with a "truffle shuffle" or a zipline into the screen door, but once you are in, you stay. The best time for me is attending or hosting IPMBA training. It is like a meeting in the attic, where we dig

through memories, joke a little, like Mouth did to the painting, and stumble upon things, like when Chunk knocked over the picture, breaking the glass. Now, we likely will not find a treasure map and a strange-looking skeleton key, and then read an article that inspires us to go on an adventure and find "rich stuff". But, we will find the rich stuff that makes up IPMBA: likeminded people. IPMBA Goonies. We almost always hear and tell stories about some of the greats that have patrolled the streets, instructed courses, and most importantly, touched our lives and left an impression. One of my favorite experiences was meeting the "helmet fit guy" at the 2022 IPMBA Conference in Dayton, Ohio. He signed my helmet. So cool to have.

Once you set off on the adventure that is IPMBA, you learn about what we do. It is like when the Goonies find the entrance into the chasm leading to the rich stuff. First, they find the restaurant that was being used as a hideout. Then they find the secret entrance in the basement after Chunk knocks over the water container and they hear the water leaking into the ground beneath the fireplace.

Compare this to the first day of IPMBA basic school. You remember this, right? The instructor tells you about the 10' box and explains the skill. Then, this master of bike ninjas rides into it and demonstrates it as if it is the easiest thing to do on a bike. Then it is your turn. You psych yourself up and get in there. Like Chunk, you say to yourself, "I got it, I got it." Then, like Chunk, you realize, "I don't got it," and **CRASH!!** You hit the ground. That crash causes the

water to leak through the cracks under the fireplace, and you realize that there is much more to this bike stuff than just riding around in a circle. You find the way to the rich stuff. Or maybe you thought Data was setting "booty traps", and that is what caused you to fall. Either way, the experience is shared with others in your class, and a permanent bond is forged. By the end of the week, you will likely "smell like Phys Ed," as Chunk says, but you will have had what might be the greatest adventure of your career in public safety.

Your journey starts with your first experience, but where you take it is up to you. You might stop once you find the wishing well, or when you find Chester Copperpot, who didn't get as far as you. But the farther you venture, the more you will find. And eventually, you will find the pirate ship where One-Eyed Willy's rich stuff is stashed. And when you do, you will become one of the greatest IPMBA Goonies. The choice is yours.

Remember: "Goonies never say die." I hope to see you in Bentonville, Arkansas, June 24-29, 2024!

Thomas joined the Norman Police Department in 2009. He is currently assigned to night shift patrol and is the training coordinator and instructor for the bike team. He has been active with IPMBA since 2011, after taking the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course. He was certified as a PCI in 2013 at the IPMBA Conference in Baton Rouge and cross-trained as an EMSCI in 2017. He became an Instructor Trainer in 2019, BRT certified in 2020, and BRT instructor certified in 2021. He currently serves as Education Coordinator on the IPMBA Board of Directors. He can be reached at Thomas.Zermeno@yahoo.com.

by **Albert Jackson, SCI #038**
Cobb County (GA) Sheriff's Office, Ret.
Atlanta Downtown Improvement District
Ambassador (ret.); Owner, Jackson PTT&TS, LLC.
IPMBA Secretary



Courtesy Albert Jackson

Last year I wrote about "Being the Boss of You." We are a year older, wiser, and more accomplished, so now I am the boss of "Us." Yes, that's right, "Us." Earlier this year, I reached the second rung on the ladder of growth when I hired my first part-time employee. Recardo is still an Ambassador with the Downtown Improvement District of Atlanta, and a fine young man who has brought growth to the company. I hope someday he will be the operator – if not the next owner – of the company. I made the decision that he needed to be vetted by my board of directors, who gave him a great review.

When I last wrote to you, I was running the business by myself. But success has brought about the need for a second person to help or be in a second place at the same time. This has brought about new challenges and demands that I did not previously expect or think of.

First, I had to adjust my pricing schedule to counteract the loss of

profit to accommodate Recardo's compensation. Those changes could not be too drastic, even if they did not completely level the profit margin at its previous point. I had not increased my prices since the start of the business in 2018, so even without the current level of inflation, the increase was already necessary.

Second, there was the decision as to what form the compensation was going to take. He had to either agree to being a Form 1099 employee and take care of his own tax burden, or I would have to establish a payroll tax account for him. We decided that the best arrangement for both parties was to increase his compensation level above minimum wage and let him report his earnings independently. But I did go farther and give him the same information and advice about tax liability that I have always given new officers coming out of the academy: if you have a 1099 job, or you get paid straight cash for extra-duty jobs, have a saving account for your taxes. Take 35 cents out of every dollar you get paid and set it aside in that savings account. Either pay estimated taxes quarterly to the IRS and your state or have that money ready to write a check to the IRS if your tax withholding doesn't cover what you have made.

Next, I had to make sure that in the event of an injury, he would be covered via workers' compensation so that he would not lose any pay or work if he could not attend his main employment. Along with this came the assurance that I would not schedule us at times that would interfere with his primary employment, especially since that employer is one of my accounts.

I made the decision early on that I could not fully duplicate my tool sets for him as Segway and TRIKKE Electric Vehicle tool kits have grown to five Craftsman cases of three sizes. So, I had to decide what "needed" to be duplicated in order for us to be in two different places at the same time, doing duplicate (or similar) work.

It turned out that this was easier than we both thought. If we must be in two places simultaneously, I take the bicycle call, which requires more tools, and Recardo takes the TRIKKE call, which requires less tooling.

If you hire an employee in a skilled position, you are responsible for their training and experience. After all, they are representing you and your brand. For me, Recardo was an easy choice. He had expressed an interest in working with me last year, and he came with some knowledge of the equipment in place.

He gained this knowledge from me; I was his initial trainer when he joined the Ambassadors. His first week was spent solely with me learning to patrol on the bicycle, the Segway, and the TRIKKE Electric Vehicle. He has great mechanical skills and has caught on very well. In May, we were commissioned to refurbish all 20 of the Ambassadors' patrol bicycles. He performed beautifully. He has also adjusted well to the TRIKKE Electric Vehicle, but we have already decided that a trip to the factory in California is in his future in 2024.

A year from now I hope to be able to report that he is doing all the work, and I am managing both him and the schedule. After all, that is what an employer does. That is the goal for next year. In 2025, I hope that we can start on our transition plan to Recardo "Being the Boss of Recardo." I hope I will run into you at the next conference; let's sit down and talk about your path to "Being the Boss of You."

Albert joined the Cobb County Sheriff's Office in 1980 and retired in 2008. He attended the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course in 2003. He joined the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, where he was a Security Cyclist for nine years. He was certified as SCI #038 at the 2018 IPMBA Conference in Saint Louis and completed the Maintenance Officer Certification Course at the 2019 Conference in Fort Worth. He is retired again and operating Jackson PTT&TS, LLC. He was elected to the IPMBA Board at the 2022 Conference, and currently serves as the Secretary. He can be reached at albert.jackson306@att.net.

E-Bikes: Speeding Towards the Future of Public Safety Cycling

by Alan Beadle, PCI #484/EMSCI #076
 Sylvania (OH) Police Department (ret.)
 IPMBA Treasurer

In recent years, the landscape of law enforcement has undergone a remarkable transformation, driven by advancements in technology and a renewed focus on community engagement. One significant evolution in the field of public safety cycling is the adoption of electric bikes, commonly known as e-Bikes. IPMBA, the leading authority in this domain, recognizes the profound impact of e-Bikes on public safety and community policing efforts. In this article, we'll explore why e-Bikes are gaining traction in the field of public safety cycling, as viewed through the lens of IPMBA.

Efficiency and Mobility

E-bikes are revolutionizing the way public safety agencies approach bike patrol and response operations. The electric motor assistance enables public safety personnel to cover larger areas with ease, significantly increasing their mobility. As is the case with conventional bicycles, e-Bikes can swiftly navigate through congested urban streets, crowded events, and off-road terrain. This enhanced mobility ensures faster response times, greater visibility, and improved accessibility to remote

locations, ultimately bolstering public safety.

Community Engagement

One of the cornerstones of modern policing is community engagement, and e-Bikes can play a pivotal role in facilitating this interaction. Like officers on conventional bicycles, officers on e-Bikes are more approachable and less intimidating than those in patrol cars. This fosters positive relationships between the police and the community, promoting trust and cooperation. IPMBA recognizes that e-Bikes create additional opportunities for officers to engage in proactive dialogue, gather valuable intelligence, and address community concerns, all while being a visible presence in neighborhoods. This approachability is also beneficial to EMS personnel, who can easily dispense public health and safety information and education.

Environmental Responsibility

Sustainability is a growing concern for law enforcement and other public safety agencies worldwide, and e-Bikes offer an eco-friendly alternative to traditional patrol vehicles. They produce zero emissions, require comparatively minimal maintenance, and have a significantly smaller carbon footprint. As stewards of public

safety, agencies that adopt e-Bikes are setting an example for responsible environmental practices, aligning with the global call for reduced greenhouse gas emissions and cleaner urban environments.

Cost-Effectiveness

Compared with other motorized modes of transportation, e-Bikes provide a cost-effective solution for public safety agencies facing budget constraints. Although more expensive than conventional bikes, they are considerably less expensive to purchase and maintain than patrol cars, SUVs, ambulances, utility vehicles, or motorcycles. Reduced fuel and maintenance costs, coupled with the potential for grants and incentives, make e-Bikes an attractive choice for agencies aiming to allocate resources efficiently while maintaining effective public safety measures.

Health and Wellness

IPMBA acknowledges the health benefits that bicycles and e-Bikes bring to public safety personnel. Regular physical activity is vital for maintaining physical and mental well-being. Like conventional bicycles, pedal-assist e-Bikes offer personnel an opportunity to stay active while on

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IPMBA E-Bike Training Module - 2019 IPMBA Conference

Courtesy Raymond Cervantes/FWPD

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duty, reducing the sedentary nature of patrol work. Improved fitness can enhance performance, reduce stress, and increase overall job satisfaction.

Safety

Safety is paramount for public safety personnel, and legal e-Bikes designed for public safety personnel reflect this principle. Equipped with features like powerful brakes, sturdy frames, and integrated lighting systems, these purpose-built e-Bikes are engineered to meet the rigorous demands of law enforcement and other public safety applications. Their maneuverability and lower speeds compared to motorized vehicles contribute to safer patrolling, particularly in congested urban areas and pedestrian zones, assuming the rider is appropriately trained and outfitted with suitable personal protective equipment.

The Future

E-bikes undoubtedly will play a role in the future of public safety cycling. Their efficiency, mobility, and capacity to foster community engagement position them as indispensable tools for modern law enforcement agencies. The

environmental responsibility, cost-effectiveness, and health benefits they offer further underscore their significance in shaping the future of public safety cycling.

As the world continues to evolve, so too must the methods and tools of public safety. E-Bikes represent a forward-thinking approach that not only enhances the effectiveness of public safety efforts but also aligns with the principles of sustainability, community partnership, and well-being. By embracing e-Bikes, public safety agencies can pave the way for a safer, more connected, and sustainable future for their communities.

IPMBA recognizes the transformative potential of e-Bikes in the realm of public safety cycling; it is actively taking the lead in shaping this evolution. Beyond acknowledging e-Bikes as integral to the future of public safety cycling, IPMBA is committed to ensuring that public safety personnel are well-prepared to harness the full benefits of this innovative technology.

Conclusion

In embracing e-Bikes and formalizing their place within the public safety cycling landscape,

IPMBA is not merely keeping pace with technological advancements, it is actively shaping the future of public safety cycling.

By remaining open-minded to change and closely monitoring the rapidly evolving e-Bike landscape, IPMBA is endeavoring to assist public safety agencies to integrate e-Bikes into their operations. This represents a testament to the IPMBA’s forward-thinking approach and commitment to the betterment of public safety personnel and the communities they serve.

Alan retired from the Sylvania Police Department after serving from 1996-2023. He got his start as a bike officer in 1993 as a park ranger with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. He attended the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course in 1997 and the IPMBA Instructor Course in 2001. Alan became a firearms instructor so he could integrate firearms training into his IPMBA Course and developed an OPOTA-certified bike patrol firearms course and introduced SIMUNITION® into his training in 2008. He is now a mobile training officer for the Ohio School Safety Center and the owner/trainer of Aegis Bike Training. Alan was elected to the IPMBA Board in 2020 and is currently serving as Treasurer. He can be reached at aegisbikettraining@gmail.com.



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2024 Courses:

June 24-28, Bentonville AR

July 29-August 2, W. Hartford CT

December 9-13, Tempe AZ

Others TBA

Lessons and Hurdles

by Adam Gaby, PCI #1362T-B/EMSCI #299T-B
Five Rivers MetroParks (OH) Ranger Division
IPMBA Board Member (Curriculum Development)

Back in 2006, I played only a small part in the IPMBA Conference that was held in Dayton, Ohio, but I saw how much fun – and how much work – it was. About twelve years later, Dayton Police Department decided they would like to host another conference – the 30th, which would take place in 2020. Sgt. Gordon Cairns of Dayton Police contacted me and asked if me and my agency would co-host the conference, along with the University of Dayton Police Department. After gaining the support of my agency, I got down to business with Sgt. Cairns, Jeff Brown (Dayton Police), and Eric Roth (UD Police).

Thankfully, Dayton officers were in the area and were able to take down the shooter very quickly. After that event, the police in the entire area were heroes, as many agencies from the area responded to the shooting and rendered aid to those who had been shot. By this time, we had begun soliciting support from local businesses, and it came flooding in.

Fast forward seven months to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the great lockdown. Many people started to work from home, and many businesses lost their employees. People stopped going out, businesses started to feel the pinch of less money coming in, and many closed their doors forever.

IPMBA again agreed to keep everything in place and hope for a miracle in 2022. Thankfully, COVID became more manageable, and preparations for the 2022 Conference went into full production.

In February 2022, the IPMBA Board traveled to Dayton for their winter board meeting and conference planning visit. I was approached by several board members about a vacant board position that they needed to fill. This was a big decision and I wanted to think on it. Two nights later, we were out to dinner with the board and my wife had come along. Little did I know that the board members conspired with my wife to guide me into accepting the appointment to the open board position. Hence, I found myself not only a member of the host agency committee, but also a member of the governing board.

For the next four months, we worked frantically to pull the conference together. We began contacting the local businesses that had pledged to support the conference, but many either did not respond or no longer wished to support the police. Luckily, we had some tenacious Dayton officers who were up to the challenge of finding other businesses to support the conference.

With one huge hurdle overcome, we now faced another: the lack of human-power, both from the co-hosting agencies and the surrounding agencies that had originally pledged their assistance. We had no choice but to ask more of the few we had, including myself. I now found myself serving as host agency co-chair, host liaison/co-instructor for the PESC II, and newly appointed board member. And I had already agreed to present, along with Trent Roach (also of Five Rivers MetroParks Ranger Division), our workshop, *Mastering Stairs and Steep Descents*.

This was on top of my daily duties as the Community Resource Officer and working the road when coverage was short. I have never felt pulled in so



2022 IPMBA Board with newly appointed Adam (center)

We started to plan the conference in 2018 and attended the 2019 conference in Fort Worth, Texas, to observe the behind-the-scenes workings. I was the lead instructor for the PESC II Course, so my ability to shadow the host agency was limited.

In August 2019, the City of Dayton experienced a horrible tragedy when a gunman opened fire, killing nine people and wounding several others. This occurred in the Oregon District, which is the entertainment district and was therefore crowded on that late Saturday/early Sunday.

In May of 2020, the view of police across the country changed. When George Floyd was killed, we were no longer seen as heroes. We became the oppressors and the enemy. COVID continued, protests broke out across the country, and along with just about everything else, the 2020 IPMBA Conference was cancelled. The co-hosts and IPMBA agreed to keep everything in place and hold the 30th IPMBA Conference in 2021 instead.

Twelve months later, COVID was still going strong and still a problem to the point that once again, the conference had to be cancelled. The co-hosts and

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THE BOARD ISSUE

by Tom Hansom, PCI #2209
Shelby County (TN) Sheriff's Office
IPMBA Board Member (Membership)



Well, we all have changes. Some family, some work, some friends, some age... some mental, some physical... and some ALL OF THE ABOVE!

The past 12 months have been a roller coaster of change and instability for me

and my wife. I began working for a new company and in a new role. On my first official day of employment, although not yet officially at work, I tripped. While trying to catch myself, I committed the cardinal sin of extending my arms and tore the rotator cuff on my left shoulder (tuck and roll, tuck and roll...). Among other things, this knocked me out of the IPMBA Instructor Course held in Gallatin, Tennessee, last year.

Three months post-surgery, with no bike riding, we went for a family visit for Christmas about 400 miles (644 km) from home. While we were away, a freak snap freeze caused an upstairs water pipe in our house to rupture. We came home 36 hours later and started trying to salvage what we could. You can fill in the rest.

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many different directions. During the week prior to and the week of the conference, I submitted 158 hours to my agency. This was not the true amount of time that I put into working those two weeks.

During the conference, I attended board meetings, served as liaison for and helped teach the PESC II course, taught my conference workshop, assisted with all kinds of issues, helped Jeff Brown (Dayton Police) design and construct the competition course, drove photographer Deanna Flaughter (Five Rivers MetroParks) around to get shots of the classes, parade, and other activities, and "other duties as assigned".

I have been told by my wife that I have a hard time saying "no" to people who ask for my help, and this experience really proved that. I am glad that I got to co-host a conference, and I am glad that I have gotten the privilege of joining the IPMBA Board, but if I had to do it all again, I would have not done it all at once!

Adam is the Community Resource Officer for Five Rivers MetroParks Ranger Division in Dayton. He has been a bike officer for more than 15 years. He is an IPMBA Instructor, Instructor-Trainer, maintenance officer, instructor for PESCII, and an avid mountain biker. With hundreds of miles of hiking trails, paved trails and mountain biking trails, Adam spends a lot of time patrolling on bike. He was appointed to the IPMBA Board in 2022 and is currently overseeing curriculum development projects. He can be reached at Adam.Gaby@metroparks.org.

Your Problem to Fix

Between packing hastily, moving three dogs, and comforting a wife who was less than thrilled with the disaster that had unfolded, my training cycle was beyond broken.

If you have made it this far, you are probably asking, "Where this guy is going?" I'm laying the groundwork for discussing getting back on the horse. While I am still in relatively good condition and able to hold my own on bike patrols, I'm no longer "in shape". Not only is this a disservice to myself, but I could also potentially let my partner(s) down in an emergency situation. Each of us encounters roadblocks that come up in duty, work, family, and life in general. The key to overcoming them is how you cope and how you get back into your groove.

As I write this, I think of the two mistreated "children" (one mountain and one road) in the garage of my new home, both of whom desperately want attention. I intend to give it to them. Breaking a cycle of bad habits is tough, but breaking back into training is sometimes even harder. It is easy to make excuses, putting it off until tomorrow is sometimes fine. However, when tomorrow becomes two days, then a week, and then months, it becomes a problem. We are professionals and adults. We make our own decisions and must own them. As professionals in bike units, we must make the decision to be more "fit for duty" than most. I'm guilty, so I'm going to wrap this up now, go A-B-C my TREK, and take her for a short spin. Cheers to all of you that have not fallen off the wagon...or the bike!

Tom Hansom is currently a member of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office Bike Unit in Memphis, Tennessee, assigned to urban park patrol. He has served as a Reserve Deputy for the past 13 years and is IPMBA's newest IPMBA Board Member, having been appointed to the at-large position responsible for cultivating IPMBA members. He can be reached at membership@ipmba.org.



Mike Wear and Adam Gaby
Photos courtesy Deanna Flaughter

Pedal Retention. Love It or Hate It, You Must Have It

by Greg Bowen, PCI #1227T/EMSCI #526T
Tarrant County College (TX) Police Department
IPMBA Board Member (Industry)

IPMBA requires four pieces of safety equipment: a high-quality public safety bicycle, in good mechanical condition, that fits the rider properly; a properly fitted and approved bicycle helmet; shatter-resistant protective eyewear for day and night; and pedal retention. Think back to when you attended your IPMBA Public Safety Cyclist (Police, EMS, or Security) course. How did you feel about your pedal retention? Some of you, although your instructor sent out pre-course information listing the specific items to bring to the course, may have shown up without any pedal retention. If so, your IPMBA instructor probably sent you to the local bike shop to buy a set of toe clips or they installed a set of toe clips on your pedals. As the class continued, you may have removed the nylon strap, hoping your instructor would not notice. Well, they noticed, and the next thing you know, the clips magically appeared back on your pedals, and your instructor was telling you that you would appreciate them by the end of the week. Guess what? They were right. Now that you are a more experienced rider, you likely will not ride without some type of pedal retention.

From your past IPMBA training, you now know that pedal retention helps in many ways. It helps keep your feet on the pedals while negotiating rough sections of the riding surface. It aids in ratcheting your pedal back to the 2:00 position when performing an angled curb assent. When you are performing more technical maneuvers, you feel more attached to your bike. Pedal retention also helps you achieve that desired, “good spin” of 75-100 rpms, for pedaling efficiency.

Past IPMBA President Kirby Beck wrote an article called *Pedal Retention*

Primer back in the fall of 2010 (<https://ipmba.org/blog/comments/pedal-retention-primer>). He does an excellent job explaining pedal retention and the details of each type. Since 2010, new pedal retention concepts have hit the market. In this article, I will revisit the long-standing types and discuss the new ones.

Toe Clips

Toe clips (a.k.a. “cages”) were the only form of pedal retention until the early to mid-1980s. They accomplished the same goal then as they do today and have much the same design. Toe clips consist of a cage that attaches to the pedals through which is laced a nylon strap used to tighten the cage down on your foot. They were the only available and acceptable type of pedal retention. IPMBA recognized the benefits and made toe clips a required piece of equipment.

Today there are two designs of toe clips: the one with the nylon strap, and one without it. The ones designed to be used without the straps (sometimes called “mini-clips”) are made of a more rigid plastic that helps keep the feet on the pedals while allowing the rider to escape the retention out the side.

Clipless Pedals

The name of these pedals is a bit of a misnomer. I will try to explain this as simply as I can.

Unlike the original toe clips, the clipless pedals do not have a toe clip (cage). You attach your foot to the pedal with a cleat that is attached to the bottom of a specialized shoe that clips onto the pedal.

Although you clip in (similar to snow skis), they are called clipless. Are you confused yet?

Among the types of clipless pedals, there are many styles for different riding conditions.

Mountain Bike

SPD (Shimano Pedaling Dynamics) usually have attachments on both sides of the pedal where the cleat attaches.

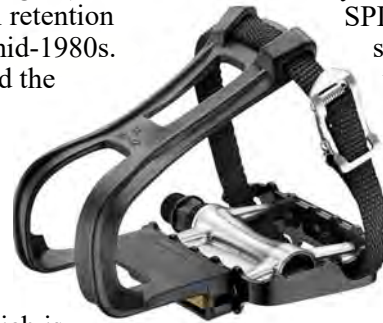
They also come in the style of the SPD pedal with a platform similar to a traditional pedal that either has the SPD retention on one or both sides of the platform. SPD-compatible shoes with recessed cleats are available, which makes them an acceptable choice for public safety use.

Crankbrothers, referred to as “egg beaters” because they resemble the beaters on a mixer, function similarly to the SPD pedals. You simply press the area of your shoe that has the cleat down on the pedal and click it onto the pedal. They are good for mountain biking in muddy conditions because the open design of the pedal allows it to shed the mud.

Road Bike

There are several different type of road bike pedals. For the sake of keeping it simple, and because public safety cyclists do not use road bikes, I will not get into a detailed description of each type of road bike pedal.

However, road bike pedals are similar to other types of clipless pedals. They are made of an alloy, composite, or carbon fiber material, making them more lightweight. For those willing to spend extra money for the ultimate in lightweight, shoes with carbon fiber soles are available. Since the cleats on these shoes are not recessed like the SPD cleats, they are not practical for public safety cycling.



(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Platform (Flat) Pedals

In 2016, IPMBA agreed to acknowledge platform pedals as an acceptable form of pedal retention,

but only if they are used in conjunction with compatible shoes.

Despite what the name may suggest, flat pedals are not what

comes stock on most bikes.

Platform pedals have a larger base or contact point on the shoe. For a platform pedal to perform correctly, the rider must wear a shoe designed to be used with the pedal. Otherwise, this is not considered pedal retention by IPMBA

standards. You should not wear a pair of running or tennis shoes or lugged boots when using these pedals.

A platform pedal has a larger contact base and pins on the pedal that grip the sole of the shoe. A proper platform pedal shoe has a smoother, softer rubber sole that grips the pins on the pedal. Some riders feel they can disengage the retention system and “bail out” more quickly while still having pedal retention when needed.

To make platform pedals perform the best, the rider must learn to somewhat “scoop” their foot on the pedal during different pedal positions to maintain the desired retention. Check out Pedaling Innovations, a Product Purchase Program participant offering a 30% discount on their Catalyst 1 model. A review by Scott Bixby, PCI #1684, can be found at <https://ipmba.org/blog/comments/pedaling-innovations-catalyst-agent-for-change>.



Magnetic Pedals

A new concept of pedal retention has recently emerged: magnetic pedals. These pedals look similar to platform pedals but have a very strong magnet mounted on the pedal. The compatible shoe has a metal plate mounted where the cleat would be mounted on a clipless pedal shoe. The attraction of the metal plate and the magnet creates another form of pedal retention. To disengage, the rider twists or rocks their foot to disengage from the retention.

Cameron Newton, PCI #1994-B, performed a field test on the Hustle Bike Labs Avery REM Tech MTB Pedal, one of the new magnet platform pedals. He wrote an outstanding article for the *IPMBA News*, 2023 Product Guide, Vol. 32, No. 1.



I recommend that you refer back to his article (<https://ipmba.org/blog/comments/do-the-hustle-avery-remtech-mtb-pedal-system>). He gives his perspective with an overall satisfactory rating. Look for Hustle Bike Labs to join the IPMBA Product Purchase Program in the near future. Their high-quality product demands a higher price, but as an IPMBA member, your access to the Product Purchase Program will make them more affordable. Remember, the savings from using the IPMBA PPP can more than pay for your IPMBA membership dues.

Be Consistent

As a professionally trained IPMBA Public Safety Cyclist, you already know that pedal retention not only mandatory, but also incredibly helpful. Pick the type that works best for you and your riding style. Personally, I like to stay consistent in my choice of pedal retention. My road bike friends poke fun at me because I run SPD mountain bike pedals and mountain bike shoes on my carbon fiber road bike. I have SPD pedals on my patrol bike, road bike, gravel bike, and mountain bikes. The reason is because of the motor memory that you develop over time. I don't want to have to stop and think about how to disengage on whatever type of retention I am using at that moment. This holds me to the rule of “train like you fight so when you have to fight, you will fight like you have trained”.

As public safety cyclists, we must be proficient with our equipment so we can better serve the public that we are sworn to protect and in order to protect ourselves.

Greg is a police captain for the Tarrant County College Police Department in Central Texas. He attended the

IPMBA Police Cyclist Course in 2001 and started the bike unit for his department. In 2011, he attended the IPMBA Instructor Course in Richmond, Virginia. Over the years he was fortunate to attend several IPMBA Conferences. His department and Fort Worth Police Department co-hosted the 2019 IPMBA Conference in downtown Fort Worth, Texas. In 2020, he was elected to the IPMBA Board of Directors and appointed to the position of Industry Liaison. In 2021, he earned the rank of IPMBA Instructor Trainer (IT). He can be reached at industry@ipmba.org.

Corporate Members

INDUSTRY

IPMBA thanks **Benelli E-Bikes, ISM Saddles, Jones & Bartlett Public Safety Group, Police Bike Store, R&B Fabrications, and Volcanic Bicycles** for their continued participation as IPMBA Corporate Members.

We welcome **Kali Protectives** as a new Corporate Member and Product Purchase Program participant! We think Kali will be of particular interest to Bicycle Response Teams. Check out the below profile!



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Notes: Email your name, agency, and IPMBA membership number to jason@kaliprotectives.com for the IPMBA discount code.

Kali Protectives provides protective gear for cyclists, such as helmets, body armor, gloves, and eyewear. Their mission is to engineer, design, and produce the safest and most sought-after helmets and protective gear in the world. To this end, they invest in research and development, materials selection, and testing via multiple labs. They offer a lifetime crash replacement warranty on helmets and use each incident as a learning experience. Bonus: they also manufacture protective gear for motorsports. For information, email jason@kaliprotectives.com and visit www.kaliprotectives.com.



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Keep Your Cool: Temperature Tee

by Sgt. Katie Fuchtmann, PCI #1414
Arizona State University Police Department

The summers in the Arizona desert can reach above 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.9 Celsius), which make it difficult to stay cool while riding your bicycle on patrol. When I became IPMBA certified 17 years ago, I rode my bicycle every shift, all shift long. These days

I find it more difficult to deal with the extreme temperatures and that is why I jumped at the chance to test the Temperature Tee.

Temperature Tee is family-owned, a small business, and their items are made in the U.S.A. The owner of the company, Jay Carnes, a former law enforcement officer in Colorado,

developed this shirt after 10 years of policing and seeking relief from the heat of wearing body armor.

The Temperature Tee is designed with a pocket located on the chest which can be used to hold either an ice pack or a heat pack. The compartment has a soft snap closure to prevent the pack from falling out.

Jay was quick to send me two t-shirts with ice packs to try on and test against the heat.

When the shirts arrived, I was a little skeptical about how it

would feel to have an icepack on my chest beneath my vest but I quickly got used to the feeling.

The placement of the icepacks helps cool the body quickly and provides a much-needed cooling feel in hot temperatures.

Shirt: The material is soft on the skin but durable. It moves with the body and is moisture-wicking. It is

thicker than I would prefer, but thin enough to allow the cooling effect to get through to the skin. A thinner shirt might cause the pocket holding the cold/hot pack to sag.

The sleeves are short enough that they do not extend past the uniform shirt sleeves, and the shirt is long enough that it stays tucked in. The shirt I tested had a snap-close pocket, but an open-pocket version is also available.

Ice Packs: The “Bundle” comes with two Nordic Ice reusable icepacks, which can also be purchased separately. The packs are available in two sizes, depending on the size of the shirt. They are very easy to replace. The small packs lasted around an hour to an hour and a half, depending on the temperature and how hard I rode. The maximum temperature during testing reached about 100 degrees (37.8 Celsius), when I got a little over an hour per ice pack.

I did change it out earlier than I needed to, so it may have lasted a little longer. I recommend having an extra ice pack to swap out while the other one is freezing. There was no condensation from the icepack, but that might not be the case if the user decides to go with a different brand of icepack.

My days of riding 12 hours in 120-degree (48.9 Celsius) heat are probably a thing of the past, but at least when I choose to ride, I will have a tool to keep me cooler for a few hours.

The pricing for the Temperature Tee ranges from \$20 (t-shirt only) to \$50 (t-shirt + two cold packs), depending on which items are purchased. Ten percent of all profits go to “Back the Blue” campaigns. They offer IPMBA members \$5 off the cost of the tee through the Product Purchase Program. Further information can be found at temperaturetee.com.

Katie is currently a patrol sergeant for the Arizona State University Police Department. She has been with the ASU Police for the last 19 years and has been riding bicycles on duty for 17 years. Katie was certified as an IPMBA instructor in 2014. She earned a Masters of Science in Leadership in December of 2022. She can be reached at Katie.Fuchtmann@asu.edu.

Photos courtesy Katie Fuchtmann





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E-bikes are gaining in popularity, especially with local police departments

by **Ralph Banasiak**

Along For the Ride, The Chicago Daily Herald

This article appeared in the April 25, 2023, edition of the Chicago Daily Herald (<https://www.dailyherald.com/entlife/20230425/e-bikes-are-gaining-in-popularity-especially-with-local-police-departments>).

Until recently, e-bikers were considered cheaters. No longer.

While e-bikes make it easier to overcome the “too” barriers – too far, too hard, too hilly – they’ve gone mainstream in the biking community. As one of the fastest growing segments of the bicycle market, e-bikes have gained acceptance while dropping that cheater image.

Still, negative impressions linger. Fires caused by lithium-ion batteries have raised alarms in major cities like New York and London. These batteries, common to many electric-assist vehicles, not just e-bikes, are especially valuable to delivery workers eking out a living in a post-shutdown economy.

Fires can occur when batteries are damaged or charged incorrectly, as when incompatible charging components are used, all very avoidable disasters per local e-bike retailers.

Sharon Kaminecki, owner of Earth Rider Cycling in Chicago said, “E-bike battery fires are a popular topic in the industry now. People who deliver have limited means and use low cost e-bikes with cheap batteries. They swap charging cords and batteries with their friends.

“We’re told that e-bikes are designed and tested as a system, often with proprietary components. You should never swap components unless it is like-for-like or with approval from the manufacturer,” Kaminecki said. Matt Sammons, co-owner of Palatine’s SamCycle Electric Bikes, echoes Kaminecki’s advice.

“I tell customers to use the correct charger for the bike, the one that comes with it. Don’t overcharge the battery – no more than 12 hours – not in extreme heat over 90 degrees [32 Celsius] or in a garage, or if the battery is cold,” Sammons said.

“All e-bikes we sell have batteries tested by independent labs, and some are UL (Underwriters Labs) certified,” Kaminecki said. “Even with that, we tell customers it’s best practice not to leave the battery charging overnight or when they aren’t at home, just in case, and to bring it in if damaged.”

Growing in Popularity with Police

Besides enticing the general public, e-bikes are multiplying among suburban police patrols. A quick 2021 survey yielded several departments with bike patrol units, but only two owning e-bikes, Arlington Heights and Deerfield. Since then, numbers have tripled to include Bartlett, Highland Park, Mount Prospect and Wauconda.

E-bike costs – purchase and training – remain high, so departments have been creative in budgeting. Per police Chief David Wermes, Wauconda’s bike patrol unit includes a Trek

and Cannondale, plus a



Pedego e-bike. “Our local bike shop (Main Street Outfitters) loaned the police e-bike to our agency,” Wermes said.

According to Officer Greg Sill, Mount Prospect recently “added three e-bikes to our existing fleet of six traditional police bikes.” Police department seizure funds were used for the purchase.

In addition, Sill appreciates the cooperation from neighboring Arlington Heights Sgt. Russell Mandel, who will train Mount Prospect officers on e-bikes in June, saving travel costs. Mandel is certified as a mountain bike and e-bike instructor by the International Police Mountain Bike Association.

Bartlett Chief Geoffrey Pretkelis reports four e-bikes purchased in the last two years, with any in-house trained officer able to operate them. “During warmer

months, officers are encouraged to ride the e-bikes in the neighborhoods, business areas and parks to interact with the community,” Pretkelis said. Commander Rob Sweeney notes they allow for positive, nonenforcement community contacts.

Deerfield Commander Oliver Cachola affirms that community connection, touting their “vital role in maintaining and increasing positive community relations between the Deerfield Police Department and residents, promoting our community policing philosophy.” He reports adding a third e-bike to their eight-bike patrol unit since 2021.

Highland Park Communications Manager Amanda Bennett said the police department expects two more e-bikes added in the coming weeks, making three in their patrol unit.

E-Bike Credits

Beyond their popularity, e-bikes offer environmentally favorable, low carbon alternatives to motorized vehicles. Like EVs, e-bike purchases are also gaining traction regarding tax credits and rebates.

President Biden’s original “Build Back Better” legislation contained a 30% tax credit for e-bike purchases, now resurrected in the E-BIKE Act legislation (H.R. 1685) introduced by Congressman Jimmy Panetta (D-California) and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) in March (S. 881). Both limit bike costs to \$5,000 (\$8,000 filing jointly) and include a sliding scale credit reduction based on buyer income.

States have also entertained similar legislation, including Illinois with four e-bike bills introduced in March. State Rep. Abdelnasser Rashid’s (D-21) bill (HB3089) offers a tax credit equal to 50% of the cost of qualified e-bikes, up to \$1,000. HB3447, introduced by assistant Majority Leader Rep. Kam Buckner (D-26), provides a schedule of rebates based on individual income, with point-of-sale rebates for bike shops in low-income neighborhoods. State Sen. Ram Villivalam (D-8) introduced SB1700 to award rebates up to \$750, while State Sen. Mike Simmons (D-7) filed SB2015 to provide rebates based on eligibility requirements.

Photo courtesy Volcanic Bikes

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ABUS Pedelec 2.0 MIPS Helmet: Comfortable and Functional with an Urban Flare

by Erik Pearce, PCI #1184

University of Wisconsin - Madison Police
Department, and

Clint Sandusky, former PCI #849/EMSCI #159
Riverside (CA) Community College District Police
Dept. (ret.)

You probably associate ABUS with innovative locks for bicycles, but did you know they also offer a wide range of

bicycle helmets? This article will explore ABUS' e-Bike-specific Pedelec 2.0 MIPS model.

If you are not familiar with the term "pedelec," it is a German/UK term derived from "pedal electric cycle" – known in the U.S. and Canada as an electric bicycle or e-Bike. Use of e-Bikes by both civilians and public safety personnel is increasing exponentially, accompanied by an increase in e-Bike-related crashes. Hence the need for a pedelec model helmet.

The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute (BHSI), citing the Dutch NTA 8876 study, notes,

"If you use a bicycle helmet for a powered vehicle traveling 20 mph (32 kph) or more, you are taking a greater risk than most unpowered bicyclists that the helmet will not be adequate for the type of crash you should expect." Therefore, they recommend a light motorcycle helmet or at least a helmet meeting the Dutch NTA 8776 e-bike helmet standard.



Some of the features of an e-Bike appropriate helmet include lower (greater) coverage around the helmet, along with additional Rotational Energy Management systems like MIPS (<https://helmets.org/mips.htm>). For more information about e-Bike helmets and the models that meet the NTA 8876 Standard, go to <https://helmets.org/ebike.htm>.

ABUS Pedelec 2.0 MIPS Helmet

ABUS describes this helmet as "A Helmet Made for The City Streets," touting comfort and protection as primary features. It also has a number of crafty and surprising integrated features.

We approached this review intent on evaluating the helmet from an end-user standpoint, free from one another's biases. We purposely refrained from discussing the helmet until we had each independently formed our own impressions. We cannot speak of the crash survivability (first-hand), as our dedication to this effort has its limits. We will simply trust the manufacturer's assertions and will stick to talking about fit and features.

As of April of 2023, the U.S. MSRP is \$199.99 with MIPS technology and \$149.99 without MIPS. The MIPS version is available in matte black or silver; the non-MIPS version offers more color options. Both come in sizes medium and large.

Pros

Erik and I agreed on many of the "pros" of this helmet. It is well-fitting; has a cool, stylish, and urban look; and includes enhanced safety features – like the retro-reflective materials on both sides of the straps and the back of the helmet, and an integrated LED taillight, which is good for extra visibility, but only effective in low-light conditions.

Its integrated rain cover, which can be hidden when not in use, is a wonderful convenience, even for us who live in SoCal. During a late March 2023 e-Bike training course, the rain cover kept my head dry and warm, and added to my visibility with retro-reflective materials on the front and both sides.

We appreciated the reportedly greater protection the MIPS model offers, and the built-in fly nets on the front of the helmet are a nice touch.

Cons

Erik and I agreed that the chin strap's magnetic buckle is not intuitive and would take a while to develop good muscle memory. Those who wear full-fingered gloves (especially cold weather ones), may find buckling it challenging to impossible. To combat that, I decided to only wear helmets with magnetic buckles, and to cut off the chin pad after my wear test.

Erik noted that the MIPS model is heavier than a normal helmet, but certainly not as heavy as some MIPS helmets he has worn. Given the integrated light and rain cover, the weight is surprisingly light.

For some of us who are retired, the price – whether with MIPS or without – is an investment, although well worth the cost to protect your brain. Unfortunately, both models are only available in medium and large sizes. The MIPS model comes in only two colors, while the non-MIPS model comes in eight.

The Bottom Line

If you ride a faster and heavier e-Bike, you need to take additional steps to protect your brain should you go down (and we all crash at some point). We encourage you to consider wearing an e-Bike-specific helmet, and strongly recommend

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

one that meets the Dutch NTA 8776 Standard. There are a number of good helmets on the market, and the sleek and “urban style” ABUS Pedelec 2.0 helmet is no exception.

We would like to thank Collin Myers, Western US Sales Manager of ABUS Mobile Security, Inc., for providing us with the two helmets for our wear tests. For more information on ABUS bicycle-related products, visit <https://mobil.abus.com/usa/>.

Erik has been in public safety and involved in bicycle racing, riding, and maintenance since the mid 1990's. He joined IPMBA in 2004 and has been an active instructor since 2012, teaching regularly, including at several IPMBA conferences. Erik has had a role in the development of police-specific e-Bikes for major manufacturers and was involved in the development of the IPMBA e-Bike Training Module. He can be reached at erikpearce@charter.net.

Clint joined IPMBA in 1994. He has conducted workshops at the 2006, 2007, 2018, 2019, and 2022 IPMBA Conferences. He served as a member of IPMBA's e-Bike Task Force and assisted PCI Erik Pearce with the E-Bike Training Module at the 2022 Conference. Clint is an active CA POST-certified Bike Patrol Instructor, 28 years and counting. He has taught, presented, authored, and consulted on e-Bike content and training to law enforcement and governmental officials, as well as the cycling community and industry both in California and nationally. He runs errands, trains, instructs, patrols, and races on e-Bikes (e-MTBs). He can be reached at clint.sandusky@gmail.com.

Photos courtesy ABUS

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Shifter Replacement

by David Cohen
Maryland National Capital Park Police Reserve Unit

We're nearing the 40th anniversary of one of the most overlooked components on a public safety bicycle – the trigger shifter. Shimano introduced the Rapid Fire in 1984 and it changed the way we approach cycling. I still remember my amazement the first time I tried them, in the mid-1990s. The first bike I owned that was equipped with them was a 1998 Klein Pulse Comp. The trigger shifters, particularly the one for the rear derailleur, worked brilliantly. But, as the years went on, the shifts became sloppy, or delayed, or I'd push the lever and nothing would happen. My gut reaction was to look at all the other parts of the drivetrain for the smoking gun: derailleur indexing, cables, cable housing, chain...but eventually, I came to the inescapable conclusion that the shifter pod had gone bad.

Replacing a shifter is not a particularly difficult task, but there are some important things to keep in mind.

Not all shifters are created equally. While this may be obvious, an 8-speed shifter is not going to work with a 9-speed derailleur. Also, there are compatibility issues among and within brands. For instance, some SRAM shifters may not work with Shimano derailleurs, and vice versa. Even some Shimano shifters may not work with particular Shimano derailleurs. Make sure you read the fine print and ensure that the replacement shifter is compatible with the derailleur on your bike. I've had good experience with MicroShift and SRAM replacement shifters for Shimano derailleurs – but again, read the fine print.

Generally, shifters are only sold in pairs if you're running a double/triple front chainring set-up (to state the obvious, single front chainring drivetrains only have one shifter). If you have a dual shifter setup and only one shifter is bad, you might be able to find the proper shifter used on eBay, for example. I've had success purchasing single shifters for some of the older department bicycles this way.

Some replacement shifters have cables included. Even if they don't, this is a good opportunity to install a set of fresh cables, and possibly even replace the cable housings if they've been on the bike for a while.

In most instances, removing the shifter also requires removing the grips, so this is also a good opportunity to upgrade your grips. It is possible to reuse the existing grips, but extreme care must be taken in their removal.

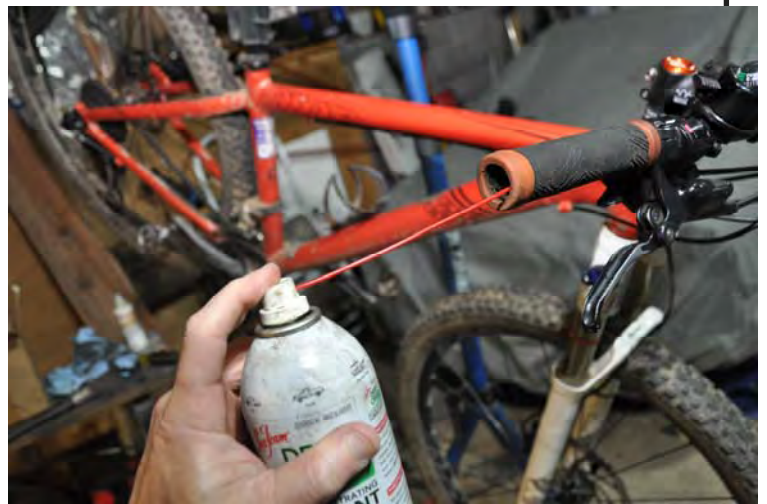


Replacing the shifter pod is a good excuse to replace your grips with new ones.

For this article, my civilian mountain bike is standing in as our example. The bike is 11 years old and the rear shifter completely went away earlier this spring. I really didn't want to throw a whole lot of money at this bike as I'm looking to replace it soon, so I went with the MicroShift 9-speed rear and triple ring front shifters.

Removal Steps

1. Remove the grips. If you have lock-on grips, it is just a matter of loosening up the bolts. If they are glued on, take WD-40 or another lubricant/solvent (my personal favorite is Seafoam Deep Creep) and wedge the straw between the grip and the handlebar. Once you shoot the solvent, start wiggling the grip. If you want to reuse the grip, be patient and move slowly, otherwise you can tear it.



Applying lubricant under the grips to remove them.

2. Loosen up the brake levers and slide them off the handlebar. Try to stow them in such a way that the levers don't dangle from the bike. A small bungee cord will do the trick.
3. Before you loosen the shifter, remove the cable crimp from the rear derailleur and loosen up the cable. It is a

lot easier to remove the cable when it is not secured.

4. Remove the shifter and pull the derailleur cable through the housings. If you choose to reuse the housings, now would be a good time to put a drop of oil into them to help the cable operate smoothly.

The amount of data that is available to cyclists today through various devices is absolutely astonishing: GPS mapping, heart rate monitoring, pedal cadence, power meters...the list goes on and on. Some of these devices are stand-alone items, while others integrate with your smartphone, which can now be mounted to the bicycle as well. There is so much information available that we feel we have to monitor that many of us suffer from “paralysis by analysis”. We’re trying to process too much information. As cyclists, particularly when operating in the public safety role, we need to ask ourselves, “What information do we really need?”

While I’m a huge fan of the heart rate monitor (See *Gears and Gadgets 15: GPS Watches*), when it comes to on-bike information, I just want the basics: speed, distance and time. You don’t need a fancy bike-mounted GPS for that, nor do you need a smartphone. When it comes to the pure basics of cycling, it’s hard to come up with more bang for the buck than the humble cyclo-computer.

Cateye has long been the “go to” brand for cyclo-computers, having produced one of the first cyclo-computers nearly 40 years ago. Like any good cycling company, they offer a range of cyclo-computers from basic to very advanced. The one I have come across most often in the public safety role is the Cateye Velo. My department-issued bicycle has a Cateye Velo 5 that is well over 10 years old and still works flawlessly. The Velo provides the basic information a cyclist needs, it’s fairly inexpensive, and is relatively easy to install and maintain. The biggest drawback of the earlier versions was that they

required a wire connection from the stem (or handlebar) mount to the sensor on the front fork. A neat installation usually required wrapping the wire around the fork or handlebar, or in some cases the cable housings, though I would not recommend this. The wire cluttered up the bicycle and made maintenance more difficult. Happily, Cateye now offers the Velo in a wireless package. You get all the benefits of the Cateye Velo without the pesky wire.

I purchased a pair of Cateye Velo 7 Wireless units for my personal use. I installed one on my recently purchased gravel bike. I installed the other one on my 26er. Installation was pretty straightforward. The only trick is making sure the sensor and the wheel magnet are no more than a half-inch (1.27 cm) apart. That proved to be a bit tricky on the gravel bike as the wide fork (to accommodate larger tires) made it difficult to get the sensor close to the wheel. It was a bit easier on the 26er. Not having the pesky wire to deal with was a huge plus, and the installation looks very clean.



(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 21)

Installation Steps

1. Place the new shifter on the handlebar. If it comes with a cable, plumb the cable through the housings (or the replacement housing).



Installing the new shifter pod.

2. Replace the brake levers. Sometimes there are fit issues between the new shifters and the existing brake levers, so take care in putting the two together.
3. Before replacing the grips, if you used lubricant/solvent to remove them, make sure you clean the handlebar with a degreaser or some acetone. If you’re replacing the grips, sometimes the grips may be of a different length than the original; this can affect the placement of the brake levers and shifters.
4. Replace the grips; adjust the brake levers and shifters for the best fit.
5. Reattach the cables to the derailleurs and adjust the derailleurs to get them dialed in.

If the bike has locking grips, the replacement shifters already have cables, and you are using the existing cable housing, the whole operation should take about an hour, depending on how quickly you can get the derailleurs adjusted.

The cost of new shifters and the labor involved in replacing them is more than a worthwhile trade-off to having to take a bike out of service and/or dispose of a bike because it no longer shifts.

Good luck and keep the rubber side down!

The Humble Cyclo-Computer

(Continued from page 22)

Programming the Cateye is pretty straightforward: set the wheel size, the units of measurement (standard versus metric), and the time. To preserve battery life, the Velo 7 has a “sleep” mode, which essentially shuts off the cyclo-computer until you hit the button. The display is very legible from the saddle and is easy to read in just about all conditions.

While riding, the Cateye gives you all the information you need. Its only failing is that accuracy is dependent on wheel size. For example, in the 700c setting on my gravel bike, the Cateye under-measures, meaning both speed and distance are greater than what you see, when compared to a bona fide GPS unit like a Garmin. On the other hand, in the 26-inch setting on my 26er mountain bike, the readings are much more accurate. The sensor occasionally becomes fickle – either not registering at all or registering a speed that is simply impossible. For example, on one ride, the Cateye registered my maximum speed at 59.7 miles (96 km) per hour, while my GPS unit registered a more modest 33.8 miles (54.4 km) per hour as the maximum speed. I tend to believe the GPS reading is more accurate, as I’ve never had a bicycle above 45 miles (72 km) per hour. The accuracy issues can be mildly annoying, but as they say, they are “close enough for government work”.

The Velo 7s strength lies in its simplicity. A public safety cyclist leads a fairly complex life between

their operational SOPs as well as the demands of their other equipment. Why make things even more difficult for the rider, particularly those who are new to public safety cycling? When training new riders, they only must learn to press one button. That’s it. The rider doesn’t have to worry about picking up a cell signal or a



Functions

- Current speed
- Maximum speed
- Average speed
- Trip distance
- Total distance
- Elapsed time
- Clock

Features

- Auto start / stop
- Pace arrow
- Simple tire size
- Programmable odometer
- Zip tie mount compatible with FlexTight™ universal bracket

GPS signal. This means the cyclo-computer will work in places where ordinary GPS or cell phone units may not, such as in tunnels or underground parking garages.

The biggest advantage the Velo 7 Wireless has over GPS units is its price: it generally lists for \$44.95 for the wireless unit. If dealing with the wire doesn’t

bother you, you can get a unit for around \$29.95, but wireless is worth the extra cost. When you consider that the least expensive Garmin GPS unit is \$199.99, you could equip five bicycles with the Cateye Velo 7

Wireless for the same price. To sweeten the deal, Cateye offers IPMBA members a one-time discount of 50% off. For departments whose bicycle units are on a shoestring budget, that is a very significant difference.

The on-bike GPS units and various cell phone applications available to cyclists are wonderful training tools when riding recreationally. They can even confer “bragging rights”. However, when a public safety cyclist is “on the clock”, how much information do we really need?

I think that just having the basics is all that is truly necessary for an on-bike unit. When it comes to providing that kind of basic information in a budget-conscious

package, it is very hard to beat the humble cyclo-computer.

Gears & Gadgets is a blog written by David Cohen #1116. It features various repair tips and tricks that David has picked up in more than 25 years of cycling, including 15 years of public safety cycling. Gears & Gadgets will also periodically review some of the latest “gadget” items of potential interest to public safety cyclists. The advice and opinions in this column are solely the author’s and should not be interpreted as IPMBA mandates or recommendations unless explicitly stated.

About the author: David Cohen is a 15-year volunteer with the Maryland-National Capital Park Police. When he isn’t riding or tinkering with bicycles, David can be found tinkering with vintage cars or his collection of 19th and early 20th century musical instruments. An avid historian, David enjoys researching and writing as well. He can be reached at onyx@sax@aol.com.



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Farewell to a Legend

by Kirby Beck, PCI #002T/EMSCI #017T
Coon Rapids (MN) Police Department (ret.)

Ed.'s Note: On May 25, 2023, Al Simpson was posthumously presented with the 2023 Allan Howard Award for Excellence. Allan Howard and Jim Bowell bestowed the award upon Al's former wife, Janet, and daughters Sharissa and Kimmi, during his memorial service. Al's impact on IPMBA cannot be overstated. He led the development of the IPMBA instructor development process through a period of transition from a "practice teach" only to a fully realized Instructor Course, complete with lecture outlines and PowerPoints, of which he was a pioneer. He had high performance standards and strong opinions, both of which helped ensure that the foundation of IPMBA's training programs remained strong yet adaptable. Kirby Beck delivered a eulogy for Al, which appears below in the form of an article. Al may be gone, but his legacy lives on and on.

On May 19, 2023, we lost a true legend in IPMBA history. Sadly, we lost Alan (Big Al) Simpson to Parkinson's Disease and Lewy Body Dementia, after a valiantly fought battle lasting several years. In the 2022 Conference Highlights issue of *IPMBA News*, Allan Howard wrote an article reflecting on Al's battle and the courage he showed throughout. His friends, his instructors, and co-instructors are left with many memories of the fun times, the laughter, and the serious work. Many members do not realize that IPMBA would not be the organization it is today without his enormous efforts in

training new public safety cyclists and new IPMBA Instructors, and that his work at the Board level helped to create and administer new programs in our expanding organization.

The legacy of Al Simpson will live on within IPMBA for decades, considering the sheer volume of basic students and instructors he trained, and how many he will indirectly "touch" through them in the future. IPMBA Director Maureen Becker reminded me that Al "shaped a generation of public safety cyclists, serving as mentor to many." I know Big Al is smiling.

Al, IPMBA PCI #165T/EMSCI #005T, was first certified as a Police Cyclist in 1995. That just lit the fire. He was certified as a Police Cyclist Instructor (PCI) in 1996, an EMS Cyclist Instructor (EMSCI) in 1999, and an Instructor-Trainer in 1998, due in part to his extensive training background. His personality, humor, skill, and professionalism made it a natural fit.

His training numbers are unmatched in IPMBA history. Al taught or co-taught 65 Police Cyclist Courses, equaling 31,368 student-hours. Most of his basic courses were taught around Florida, working at times with training partners Dominic Angiolillo,

Ed Brown, or Eddy Croissant. Al also taught or co-taught 26 EMSC Courses (6,464 student-hours), six Security Cyclist Courses (944 student-hours), eight Police Cyclist Instructor Development Courses (which was eliminated with the creation of the IPMBA



Photo courtesy Kirby Beck

Instructor Course) and 20 IPMBA Instructor Courses (21,888 student-hours).

IPMBA records show Al taught an amazing 60,656 student-hours, which translates into 2,527 days, or 6.9 years! The titles "Legend" and "Legacy" were obviously earned. And Al didn't become a certified IPMBA PCI until he was 53 years old!

Al served as a member of the IPMBA Board of Directors from 1999-2002. There he took on the difficult role of Education Director. This was during a time when new IPMBA Instructors were mentored and had to submit a video tape (VHS!) of one of their presentations for final approval. Who knows how many of those videos Al had to review and then approve or deny. That must have been mind-numbing, to say the least, and fraught with technical difficulties. To improve the process and help ensure quality and consistency, Al took the lead on creating the IPMBA Instructor Course. At the 2014 IPMBA Conference, Al was presented with an Exemplary Service Award for his contributions. Much of what Al helped develop is still part of the IC today. Those who participated in the recent curriculum update process could "hear" Al speak through the pages.

Like most of us, Al had several bikes. He rode a Cannondale full-suspension bike for many years. Al loved to ride down stairs. I mean, he

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Photo courtesy Kirby Beck

Allan Howard and Jim Bowell present the 2023 Allan Howard Award for Excellence to members of Al Simpson's family.

Farewell to a Legend

(Continued from page 25)

REALLY loved to ride down stairs, so much that he sought them out. Once when we were in Washington DC, riding around sight-seeing (the day before a class), we went by the famous “Exorcist Stairs” in Georgetown. He came THIS close to riding down them.

Al was a big guy, and riding down all those stairs came at a price. The price was a broken bike frame. “No worries”, he thought, “Cannondale has a ‘lifetime’ warranty”. So, they replaced his bikes, two or three times. Eventually, though, they voided his warranty and essentially told him that HIS lifetime was over! In the meantime, Al had been given a white-framed Smith and Wesson police bike. S&W made and marketed “police mountain bikes” in the early 2000’s. Many departments around the U.S. rode them at the time, and they were a pretty good bike for the money. Al was even invited on an all-expense-paid trip to INFOPOL (a police product expo) in Belgium to help with the marketing of the S&W bikes in Europe. The S&W eventually became Al’s main ride. Cannondale blew their chance – Al could have been the perfect product test rider!

Al grew up in Columbus, Indiana, just outside of Indianapolis. After high school, in 1962, Al joined the U.S. Air Force. After his basic training, he was selected for training for AF Security Police. He said that he had joined the Air Force “to see the world,” but his first assignment was at Grissom AFB near Kokomo, Indiana. It was so close to home that he could have lunch with his mom! Al was stationed there for his whole six-year stint. Seeing the world would have to wait.

After the service, Al became more involved with his love of music and of playing music. He teamed up with a group of friends to form a rock and soul band, as many folks did in the late 60’s. Al’s talent on the guitar and for singing, and his penchant for entertaining, helped the group to succeed. The group found themselves

booked in south Florida, playing in what was called the “Holiday Inn Circuit,” a rotation of cocktail lounges and other venues that featured live music. Al never gave up his love of being an entertainer. His success as an instructor was largely because he thought of teaching as just another way of entertaining people. Before the start of a class, it wasn’t unusual to hear Al say “it’s showtime.” It was while playing at Big Daddy’s “Playtime” Lounge, a cop bar in Pompano Beach, Florida, that his interest in becoming a police officer was piqued by talking with some of the officers who frequented the joint.

After a couple of years as a Pompano Beach Police Department Reserve Officer, Al completed Broward Police Academy in 1975 and became a Pompano Beach police officer. He was already 31 years old when he started at PPPD. Al was a very successful and well-liked police officer and was eventually promoted to Sergeant. He was involved in a number of endeavors; he was an FTO, a SWAT team member, a firearms training officer and armorer, and the department training coordinator. He eventually became the head of the bike patrol unit, which he essentially started.

Al was working as a narcotics officer about the same time Crockett and Tubbs were running around nearby in parts of south Florida on the TV show “Miami Vice.” Al wasn’t running around in designer clothes to be sure, but he did sport pretty awesome Afro-style hair and a full beard! Most of us knew only his trademark Fu Manchu ‘stache.

Two of his off-duty passions were motorcycle riding and going to NASCAR races. As a member of the Blue Knights Motorcycle Club, he went on a number of group rides around the country. That love of two wheels would never die, especially

once he discovered the joys of riding a mountain bike, the effectiveness of bike patrol, and his extraordinary passion for teaching it. After his illness was diagnosed, and its effects became more pronounced, Al was no longer able to ride his trusted Smith and Wesson mountain bike, the only one he couldn’t break, or the motorcycle his brother had given him to ride. Losing his ability to ride on two wheels was one the greatest losses of his life, he later told me.

After his retirement from Broward County Sheriff’s Office, which had taken over Pompano Beach Police, “Sgt. Al” returned to Indiana, moving to Greenwood, outside of Indianapolis. He set up a studio and reconnected with making and recording music. He and some of his old band mates actually did “get the band back together” and they called

themselves *The Viagraphonics*. Their marketing motto was “Rock Hard After All These Years.” They played a few places and even recorded a live concert CD. It was great until Pfizer lawyers sent them a “cease and desist” letter. The band didn’t last much longer and quickly faded into Indiana history.

Al loved attending IPMBA Conferences and keeping in touch with old friends. It was at one of these conferences that a couple of his EMS friends first noticed something wasn’t quite right with his gait and other neurological things. Not long afterwards, Al was diagnosed with Parkinson’s. As Allan Howard noted in his article, Al came to a couple of IPMBA conferences and though he appeared quite obviously affected and hobbled by the disease, he wasn’t afraid or embarrassed to be seen by his friends and long-time associates. He knew that was his life, and he had accepted it. Over several years, the disease progressed, and, as predicted, he continued to decline.

(Continued on page 27)



Last Course

Al Simpson was a great friend, colleague, riding buddy, and mentor. He & I rode with a group in Moab and Fruita, and we taught IPMBA Instructor Courses together. I co-taught with Al in his last course before he retired from teaching. Al was an amazing human being whom I will sorely miss. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family but know that his spirit lives on within me and he leaves a lasting legacy with public safety cyclists and IPMBA.

– Mitch Trujillo,
Boulder (CO) Police

He'll Be Sorely Missed

When I met Al 20+ years ago in south Florida, I learned that we shared the same commonalities in life. We like playing music in bars; we were both “recruited into police work” in Broward County, Florida; we share the same name and initials; and we both have a passion for police on bikes and love for IPMBA. Al was a great mentor, educator, and facilitator for this awesome organization. His techniques have been passed down to many other IPMBA instructors and will be for generations to come. His smile and humor and love for safe cycling will be sorely missed but not forgotten.

– Allen L. Stotler, Sunrise (FL) Police



Photo courtesy Allen Stotler
Al Simpson and Allen Stotler

Never Backed Down From a Challenge

Big Al was my instructor trainer over 20 years ago. He never backed down from a challenge and when a student said “you can’t ride up stairs”, Al just looked at them, smiled, and proceeded to show that it can be done. He motivated and inspired and the world was a better place because Al was here. He will be missed, but never forgotten. – Bruce Jackson, George Mason University (VA) Police (retired)

(Continued from page 26)

My wife and I went to visit Al at his care center in January 2023, a few months before he passed. His memory was waning, and he confused some family members with others. I was told he might not remember me. But Al never lost his love for IPMBA. Most days he wore one of his IPMBA conference instructor shirts. His daughter Sharissa told me that in his mind he was still a police officer, and was still teaching bike patrol. I was blessed that Al did still remember me after the many classes we co-taught, our many stints as roommates, our time driving around the country, and countless shared meals. His smile, beaming through his otherwise confused expression, told me he recognized and remembered me. Somehow that little twinkle in his eyes shined through, and I knew that he knew. Not every

memory was there, but they weren’t all gone. We could tell he was still a little confused as he tried to explain the benefits of police bicycle patrol to me...I could only smile.

I brought Al a couple of gifts. I brought him a framed photo of him taken at the IPMBA Conference in Indianapolis in which his help was instrumental to its success. I also brought him a bowl of chili from Nick’s Chili Parlor in Indianapolis. He loved to bring me there whenever I visited. He said that, besides Cheddars, it was his favorite place. He was sitting at the dinner table digging into the chili when we had to head out. Let me tell you – that last goodbye was a tough one – I figured that would be the last time I saw my old friend alive. Sadly, it was.

Al’s funeral was May 25th, in Greenwood, Indiana. He was dressed

in a high-viz yellow IPMBA Conference Instructor shirt. The two-tone blue Olympic bike patrol jacket so many of us had seen him in over the years was hanging next to him. His trusty, and still unbroken, Smith and Wesson Police bike was resting on its stand alongside the casket, ready to roll. He had personalized license plates in two states that read “IPMBA”; one of them was also on display nearby. Al Simpson lived, breathed, and died IPMBA.

IPMBA to the end – just the way a legend would want to go.

Kirby retired after 28 years with Coon Rapids (MN) Police Department. He has 14 years of police bike patrol experience. A founding member and past President of IPMBA, he was co-creator of the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course and Instructor Course. He contributed to both the Complete Guide to Police Cycling and the Complete Guide to Public Safety Cycling. He can be reached at kirby@kbeckconsulting.com.

Memories of Al

Where He Loved To Be

There are many reasons we call him “Big Al”; not the least of which was his heart and soul that everyone in his sphere of life came to admire and respect. Al was big on friendship and camaraderie and forged lasting friendships everywhere he went. The accompanying picture shows

Big Al at the Indianapolis IPMBA conference (2008), surrounded by some of his best friends and admirers; that’s where he loved to be. I understand our Lord has already put him in charge of making all complete their ABC Quick Checks before entering the pearly gates. Al was always big on safety. God bless you Big Al. We’ll miss you.

– Tom Woods, Denton (TX) Police (retired)



At the 2008 Conference in Indianapolis

Photo courtesy Tom Woods

Al Never Met a Stranger

RIP Big Al, you were one of the best. Looked forward every year to seeing you at the conference. Al was my Instructor-Trainer 20 years ago this month [May] in Charleston, WV. I don’t believe he ever met a stranger and he always had a funny story to tell. We will miss you, buddy. We will see ya on the other side.

– Dwight Edwards, Cabell County (WV) EMS (retired)

The Bear Riding a Bike

The first time I saw Big Al was at an IPMBA conference many years ago. He was riding a mountain bike, and I thought, “That bear is riding a bike!” Over the years, at conferences, I got to know Big Al better. It was always a joy to see him every year and listen to his stories. He always greeted me with that big bear hug and a smile. I shall never forget his kindness and dedication. I feel blessed that I knew him.

– Artie Gonzales, Topeka (KS) Police (retired)



Al Simpson, Matt Langridge, David Hildebrand

Photo courtesy David Hildebrand

The World is Less

Al was a great friend and mentor to me through the years and our times with IPMBA. His booming laugh and sense of humor were absolutely unmistakable. The picture is from when we taught the first Instructor Course outside of the U.S., in York, England. We had a blast despite one of us almost being run over on our bikes each day due to looking the wrong way. The world is lessened by his leaving but the memories of times spent with him are extraordinarily bright. Love ya and miss ya, Al.

– David Hildebrand, Denton (TX) Police



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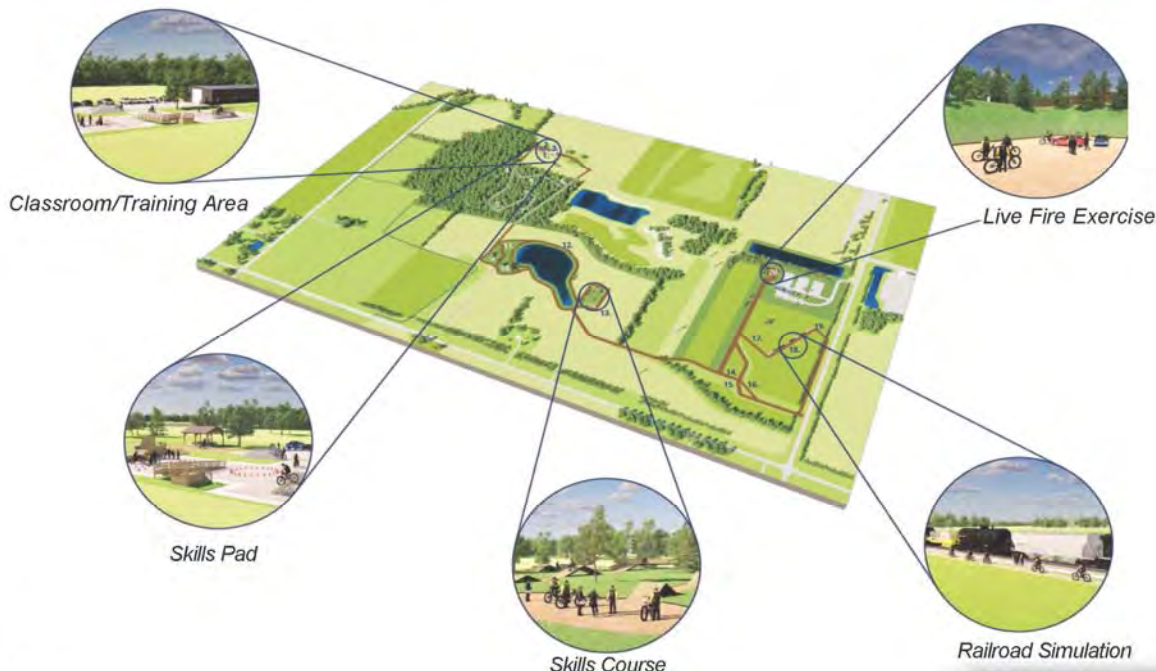
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Christopher Bartolomei, University at Buffalo (NY) Police – Retired

Neil Belland, Toronto (ON) Police – Retired

Lee Benson, Upper Dublin (PA) Police –
Now Chief of West Whiteland (PA) Police

William Bergin, University of Washington Police –
Retired; now with the King County Sheriff's Office

Christopher Conn, Cypress Creek (TX) EMS –
Now with Apollo's Forge Event Medicine

Christopher Force, League City (TX) Police – Unretired;
now back with Galveston (TX) Police

Brian Gillman, Cypress Creek (TX) EMS –
Now owner of Apollo's Forge Event Medicine

Robert Hall, Leesburg (VA) Police –
Moved on from policing

Thomas Lester, Cook County Sheriff's (IL) Office –
Retired

Michael Lewis, Atlanta (GA) Fire –
Now training coordinator for Virgin Islands Fire and
Emergency Medical Services

Andre Marentette, Windsor (ON) Police Service –
Now with a local fire department

Scott Meier, Texas Medical Center Police –
Now with Texas Children's Hospital Security Services
David Millican, Denton (TX) Police – Retired; now with
Denton County Environmental Health Division

Cameron Newton, Denton (TX) Police –
Now with Frisco (TX) Police

Derek O'Neill, Point Pleasant Beach (NJ) Police –
Retired

Steven Ray, Harris County (TX) ESD II –
Now with Klein Fire Department

Keene Red Elk, Lafayette (IN) Police –
Retired, now teaching high school criminal justice

Stanley Sedillo, Auburn (WA) Police –
Now with Port of Seattle Police

David Sitz, Chandler (AZ) Police – Retired

Harris Tapp, Hattiesburg (MS) Police – Retired

Matthew Tomlinson, Harris County (TX) ESD 11 –
Now with Northwest Community Health

Shane Walter, Kent (WA) Police – Retired

Richard Scott Werkheiser, Pratt & Whitney (CT)
Security – Retired

Brandon Williams, York-Poquoson (VA) Sheriff's Office
– Now with Virginia Dept. of Criminal Justice Services



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10 Tips for Bike Officers

This article was published on the Police magazine website on August 25, 2023. See <https://www.policemag.com/patrol/news/15545832/10-tips-for-bike-officers>.

Bike patrol officers play a vital role in modern law enforcement, utilizing two wheels to navigate the streets and connect with communities. To excel in this unique role, officers must possess a combination of both biking and policing skills.

Whether you're a seasoned bike officer or hoping to one day patrol by bike, these 10 tips from the International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) Board of Directors can help you enhance your effectiveness, safety, and impact.

Conduct an "ABC Quick Check" Before Each Shift

Even a well-maintained bicycle is subject to mechanical problems, and not all patrol bikes get the TLC they deserve. This preventive check can help reduce the risk of experiencing a mechanical failure while on patrol.

Air: Check the tire pressure.

Brakes: Check the brakes for wear and adjustment.

Crank: Check the crankset (bottom bracket, crankarms, and chainrings).

Quick: Check all quick releases (hubs, seat post, etc.) to make sure they are tight, but not too tight, and that the levers are in the correct position.

Check the overall condition of the bike by taking a short ride to make sure everything is working properly.

E: If riding an e-bike, check the computer, ride/assist mode switch, battery, motor, speed sensor, etc. Make sure the battery is fully charged.

Stay in Shape

Health and safety should be high priorities for all law enforcement officers, and it is especially important for those who rely on pedal power. Work out regularly and include aerobic exercise, strength

training, and flexibility-building exercises. If possible, engage in both on-road and off-road riding. Both will bolster your physical fitness, but on-road riding will improve your traffic skills, and off-road riding will enable you to develop a high concentration of bike skills in a very short time period.

Engage in Regular In-Service Training

Bike skills are perishable. They can and will deteriorate if not routinely practiced. Even if you operate a bicycle on duty regularly, IPMBA recommends quarterly in-service training, which can include skill development, firearms, scenarios, mission-specific operations, etc.

Make sure your training is "Three-R": recent, realistic, and relevant. Continued in-service training is needed to maintain and expand your knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Know Your Limitations

Know your riding capabilities. When on patrol, ride within your limits. On patrol is not the time to conquer a new obstacle in an unfamiliar area while responding to a call. If unsure of your ability to overcome an obstacle, go around, dismount and carry, or slow down. A broken bike or a broken officer is no good to the person who needs your assistance.

Become More Proficient with Your Sidearm

Set higher standards than your department's qualification standard and seek out bicycle-specific firearms training. During training, wear your full-duty bike uniform, footwear, duty gear, and personal protective equipment (gloves, helmet, eyewear, and ballistic vest) as

they will affect your technique and accuracy. Practice exertion drills and dynamic dismounts before firing. And practice at greater distances. On a bike, you are more exposed, and not having access to a long rifle means you need to be better with your sidearm.

Communicate Early and Often

Even in an era of GPS and other tracking devices, you must always remain aware of your location and communicate it to other officers and dispatchers. Because bicycles can go places inaccessible to standard patrol vehicles, it may be difficult for your backup to locate you. Prior to any enforcement action or contact, relay your position using both street names and landmarks. If you ride with a partner, pre-determine who will serve as contact and cover, and develop a system of verbal and non-verbal signals.

Don't Give Up the Mechanical Advantage

What separates bike patrol from foot patrol is the ability to cover more territory, at a higher speed, and with less fatigue. A bike officer can patrol a larger area than a foot patrol officer while still providing personalized service. The mechanical advantage also enables a bike-mounted officer to remain in pursuit of a running suspect until the suspect is exhausted and/or until a motorized backup unit arrives.



Officers who patrol by bike should always be sure to take time during firearms training to focus on bike-specific shooting drills and tactics.

Photo courtesy Scott Parr

10 Tips for Bike Officers



Using a bike patrol officer for community engagement can at times be more than just slow rolling through festivals and events. Also, off-road riding can improve an officer's skills.

Photo courtesy Nick Lucey

Use the Bike as a Community Engagement Tool

The bicycle enables you to more easily engage with members of your community and your local businesses. Use it to build strong ties so that the community and businesses are more likely to support you in your efforts to protect and serve. The personal relationships you foster can gain you strong allies if your bike operations are threatened by budget cuts and/or personnel shortages. Bicycle safety education and bicycle theft prevention programs, community rides, and bicycle/helmet/light giveaways are just a few ways to engage in relationship-building.

Expand Your Bike Patrol Horizons

Don't think about the bike as being merely a mode of transportation; it is so much more than that. There are countless ways in which this important policing tool can be utilized. During the course of a shift, your patrol bike can not only take you where you need to go, but it can also serve as your office, a barricade, a signaling device, an observation platform, a shield, and a conversation starter. Bikes can be used for traffic enforcement, surveillance, tourist and nightlife district policing, crowd management, school resource officers, and community relations – the sky's the limit!

Set a Good Example

Bike officers are constantly in the public eye. Know and follow the laws and regulations governing cycling in your jurisdiction. Wear a helmet and other personal protective equipment. Communicate your movements clearly with other road users. Use caution when cycling in crowded areas or around pedestrians and yield as necessary. Be respectful and courteous to members of the public. Always follow department policies and procedures when using your bike on duty, and always represent your department and profession in a professional and responsible manner.



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Now Accepting Award Nominations!



IPMBA is accepting nominations for the 2024 Allan Howard Award for Excellence. The deadline for 2024 nominations is **April 1, 2024**. The award(s) will be presented at the 2024 IPMBA Conference in Bentonville, Arkansas (June 24-29).

The Allan Howard Award of Excellence has been established to recognize individuals who have taken exemplary action to further IPMBA's mission. It is typically presented during the IPMBA Conference to IPMBA members who have been nominated by a colleague and selected by the awards committee.

Honorees must be current IPMBA members and must be nominated by someone who is familiar with their contributions to public safety cycling. Self-nominations will not be accepted. Nominations may be for work within their own communities, on a regional level, nationally, and/or within IPMBA.

Nominations

IPMBA is seeking nominations for public safety cyclists who have gone above and beyond in their support of public safety cycling.

To be eligible, a nominee must be a volunteer, part-time, or career law enforcement, security officer, firefighter or emergency medical services provider who is or has been actively involved with department-based bicycle operations, including retired individuals. Nominees must be also be current IPMBA members.

Please describe, in detail, initiatives, and/or actions undertaken, developed, and/or performed by the nominee that demonstrate their outstanding dedication to public safety cycling during the past calendar year or over the course of their affiliation with IPMBA. Efforts may include, but are not limited to, creating or expanding bike operations within their agency and/or others, developing community outreach programs, working with local, state or national elected officials in support of bicycle-related legislative actions, participating with and providing support for IPMBA's projects, programs, and initiatives, etc.

Application Process

Download the *Allan Howard Award of Excellence* Nomination Form from the IPMBA website or email the Awards Committee at awards@ipmba.org to request one.

Submit the application, along with a nomination letter of no more than one page and up to five supporting documents (articles, letters of commendation related to the nomination, letters of recommendation, etc.), as well as a photo (if possible) to the Awards Committee by **April 1, 2024**. For guidance on how to write a compelling nomination, please consult "How to Write a Compelling Nomination" on the Allan Howard Award page on the IPMBA website.

The Awards Committee will review all applications and, at their discretion, select up to two awardees.

Award recipients will be notified by May 15, 2024, or taken by surprise during the presentation.

The 2024 Allan Howard Award of Excellence will be presented at the 2024 IPMBA Conference in Bentonville, Arkansas (June 24-29).

About Allan

Allan Howard is a retired sergeant with the Dayton (Ohio) Police Department. Allan started his distinguished career in law enforcement in 1982 and retired in 2008. During his career, he held various assignments, including foot patrol, motorcycle patrol, Dayton Police Academy instructor, SWAT team member, patrol operations supervisor, Internal Affairs Bureau investigations supervisor, fleet manager, and founding member of the bicycle patrol and the Dayton Bike School. Prior to becoming a police officer, Allan served in the United States Marine Corps from 1977-1981 as a machine gunner.

From 1984 to 1997, Allan raced professionally as a United States Cycling Federation (USCF) and a National Off-Road Bicycle Association (NORBA) racer. He

Nominate current
IPMBA members
who have...
outstanding
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safety cycling

competed for DCC/Huffy, DCC/Huffy/Raleigh, Huffy/Hain Natural Foods and Chevrolet/LASD.

Allan is one of the founding members of IPMBA and was its first chair, serving from 1990 until 1997.

He was a co-creator of the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course and a co-author of the *Complete Guide to Police Cycling*, the first manual for public safety cycling.

Allen has authored numerous articles about bike patrol and training for *IPMBA News* and other publications. He is a highly respected instructor who has trained more than 3,000 bike officers and still makes guest appearances to assist with classroom and on-bike sessions.

DONATE TODAY!

It was another year without an IPMBA Conference, one of our primary sources of revenue. Although we made up much of the lost revenue through offering more regional training courses than usual, we can still use your extra support.

In addition to making a donation, you can show your support by purchasing the *Complete Guide to Public Safety Cycling, 3rd Edition*, which is available in both print and as an e-book.



We derive a royalty from every copy purchased, so the more Jones & Bartlett sells, the more we benefit.

Instructors: by building the books into your course budgets you will help us — and your students — even more!

The cost of just about everything keeps increasing, but we continue to strive to provide you with the resources and support you expect and deserve.

Since 1991, IPMBA has been the driving force behind public safety cycling. Today, bikes are used in nearly every facet of public safety. IPMBA unites a diverse group of public safety cyclists to share knowledge and expertise, which in turn helps us to advance the profession of public safety cycling.

What does IPMBA do for you?

We produce the excellent, information-filled *IPMBA News* that you are currently reading.

We work closely with manufacturers to help ensure that their products meet your needs and encourage them to enroll in our **Product Purchase Program**, through which you are eligible for discounts on a variety of products for personal and professional use (see the listings in this issue).

We author publications, including educational materials, position papers and model policies, as well as our signature work, the *Complete Guide to Public Safety Cycling*.

Next year, we expect to be back to offering the only **public safety cyclist training conference and product exhibition**.

We host a **resource-packed website**, **FaceBook** page, and **LinkedIn** group to help you keep pace with public safety cycling news from around the world. We offer outstanding **networking opportunities**, through our live events and via IPMBA HQ, which serves as your **information clearinghouse** and referral point.

Even with our limited resources, we strive to serve you to the best of our ability. If you are in a position to do so, please make a **contribution** to help us keep those wheels turning!

Thank you for your support of IPMBA and public safety cycling!

Thank You, Donors!

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Welcome, New Instructor-Trainers!



Elizabeth Bouchard

Congratulations to **Elizabeth Bouchard**, PCI #905T-B/EMSCI #214T-B, and **Andrew Humes**, PCI #1515T-B/EMSCI #374T-B, on having achieved Instructor-Trainer status.

Liz attended the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course in 2005 and has been an active member of the University of Guelph's bike unit ever since, becoming supervisor in 2017. She was certified as a Police Cyclist Instructor in 2006, and as an EMS Cyclist Instructor in 2008. She completed both the Bicycle Response Team Training and the BRT Instructor Seminar in 2017. She attended the PESC II Course in 2018. In addition to having attended the 2006, 2008, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2022 Conferences, she presented a workshop, *Tackling Bike Theft*, at the 2008 Conference. Liz was elected to the IPMBA Board of Directors in 2018 and is currently serving as Vice President.

In her Instructor Course application, Liz stated that she was very impressed with the way in which the Police Cyclist Course was organized and that she was buoyed by the enthusiasm of the other students who were from different services. She was "excited about the prospect of having the opportunity to share this course with the many police services that are in need of it." As the longest-tenured IPMBA Instructor in Canada, and the first IPMBA Instructor-Trainer both in Canada and outside of the United States, she has clearly achieved that goal, and then some.

Andrew attended the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course in August 2013. He was certified as a Police Cyclist Instructor in 2015, completed the PESC II Course in 2016, and became an EMS Cyclist Instructor in 2017, all at the IPMBA Conferences. He attended the Bicycle Response Team Training in Spring, Texas, in 2015, and the BRT Instructor Seminar in 2018. He served as an aide to the

BRTT at the 2018 Conference, stepping into the role of instructor in 2019 and 2022. He also co-conducted workshops about *Tourism-Oriented Policing* and *Nightlife District Operations and Tactics* from 2016-2019 and 2022. Andrew was a contributor to the *Complete Guide to Public Safety Cycling, 3rd Edition*.

In his Instructor Course application, Andrew stated that he hoped to involve others in police cycling as safe, efficient, and effective officers. He also noted that police departments under-utilize bike patrol and expressed his intention to champion putting more cops on bikes in communities. Andrew leads by example, exhibiting a high level of professionalism, a commitment to ongoing skill development, and a willingness to serve his fellow public safety cyclists by sharing his skills and abilities.



Zombie Jerry and Andrew in 2017

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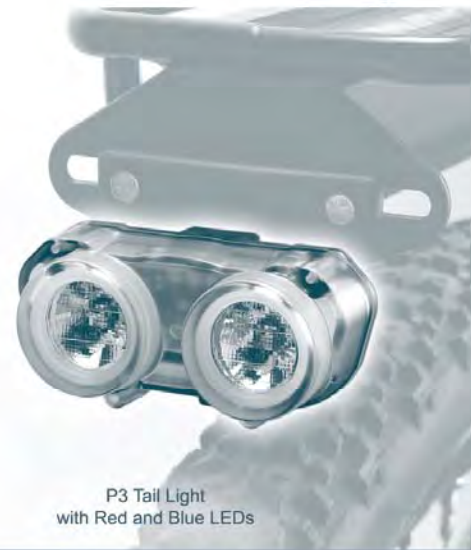
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August 9-13, 2023 – Guelph, Ontario

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September 25-29, 2023 – Aurora, Colorado



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Logan Opalinski, Denver Health Paramedics, Denver CO; **Daniel Ouilliber**, Aurora Police Department, Aurora CO; **Kyle Peterson**, Auraria Campus Police Department, Denver CO; **Justin Prindle**, Billings Police Department, Billings MT; **Kevin Rose**, Sacramento Police Department, Sacramento CA; **Tyler Sanchez-Mirabal**, Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, Albuquerque NM; **Dan Smick**, Aurora Police Department, Aurora CO; **Thomas Starz**, Aurora Police Department, Aurora CO; **Ian Thomson**, Aurora Police Department, Aurora CO

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September 25-29, 2023 –
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Habibovic, Brentwood Police Department, Brentwood MO; **David Ham**, Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington DE; **Kevin MacFarlane**, Prince William County Police Department, Woodbridge VA; **Rae-Lynn Massey**, Windsor Police Service, Windsor ON; **Patrick McKenna**, Milton Hershey School Safety & Security, Hershey PA; **Martin Turofski**, Thomas Jefferson University Public Safety, Philadelphia PA; **Arturo Alejandro Venereo**, Charlottesville Police Department, Charlottesville VA; **Daniel Vignola**, Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington DE; **Rodney Villanueva**, Alexandria Police Department, Alexandria VA; **Binh Vu**, Alexandria Police Department, Alexandria VA; **Chris Witcoski**, Broward Community College Campus Safety, Davie FL



October 16-20, 2023 –
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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In July 2023, IPMBA welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors and said farewell to two previous members. We thank Brian Gillman, EMSCI #189T-B, for his nine years of service. During that time, Brian made his mark in many ways, most significantly through applying his event management experience in the role of Conference Coordinator. He intends to continue to loan his expertise as a member of the Conference Committee, which will be headed by newly elected member Steven Ray. We also thank outgoing member Kevin Angell for his year of service in the membership/marketing role, and welcome Thomas Hansom to serve the remainder of his term. Tom has the distinction of being the first reserve officer to serve on the board. Greg Bowen was elected to another term and will continue to occupy the role of Industry Liaison. Read about our newest board members here, and visit <https://ipmba.org/about/ipmba/board-and-staff> to learn about our sustaining members.

Steven Ray, EMSCI #349-B

Klein Fire Department, Klein TX

Email: conferences@ipmba.org

IPMBA Member Since: 2011

IPMBA Instructor Since: 2012

My IPMBA Instructor:

Tom Harris, EMSCI #030T-B/PCI #861T-B

My Favorite Place to Ride: Off-road, historical sites, and along the coast

My Most Memorable Moment on Bike Duty: Working the Iron Man Competition in The Woodlands, Texas, and the Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Spring, Texas.

My Words of Wisdom to Other Public Safety

Cyclists: Expect the Unexpected.

Thomas Hansom, PCI #2209

Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Memphis TN

Email: membership@ipmba.org

IPMBA Member Since: 2018

IPMBA Instructor Since: 2023

My IPMBA Instructor: Derek Wilson, PCI #1761

My Favorite Place to Ride: TPC Southwind during the FedEx St Jude Golf Tourney

My Most Memorable Moment on Bike Duty:

Dispatch entirely confused about why, after dispatching us to a theft from motor vehicle call, we couldn't take the report on our CAD (we don't have computers on our Rockhoppers).

My Words of Wisdom to Other Public Safety

Cyclists: Always be aware of your situation, so you are proactive, not reactive.

Always Look Eye

by Thomas Zermeno, PCI# 1390T-B/EMSCI# 412T-B
Norman (OK) Police Department
IPMBA Board of Directors: Education



Perhaps one of the greatest instructors in cinema was Mr. Miyagi from the original *The Karate Kid* movies. You know the ones I am talking about. I am referring to the ones with Ralph Macchio (Daniel LaRusso) and Pat Morita (Mr. Miyagi). The following is going to be filled

with “Miyagi-isms” and how they apply to being an IPMBA Instructor. I suggest that you play the song “You’re the Best” by Joe Esposito while reading this article.

There is a scene in the movie in which Mr. Miyagi has Daniel standing in the ocean with one leg lifted, trying to maintain his balance as the waves come crashing in. Off in the distance, he sees Mr. Miyagi standing on a pole with one leg up. He then places his arms in the air and kicks with the planted leg, simultaneously switching his planted foot. This is the crane kick that we later learn about and is used by Daniel to win the match against his nemesis, Johnny Lawrence. Daniel asks him what he was doing and Mr. Miyagi tells him what it is and that, if used properly, it cannot be defended against. He then asks when he will learn it. Mr. Miyagi’s response is the best one to apply to our courses: *“First learn stand, then learn fly. Nature rule, Daniel-San, not mine.”* Remember when you are instructing that many of your students haven’t even gotten on a bicycle prior to your class. We must start with the very basics and work our way up. I always state that we will operate on a “crawl, walk, run, sprint”, in that each day we increase the intensity.

Please keep in mind that all of the material that you are provided for instruction has gone through rigorous processes to ensure it is the best and most up-to-date possible. Getting familiar with it is not enough. Getting intimate with the material is imperative to putting out a quality product. You must be patient with and trust the learning process that is set forth in the curriculum. As Mr. Miyagi states: *“You trust the quality of what you know, not the quantity.”* Once you get to know and become very familiar with the product, become proficient with it and you can be the best... around. *“No such thing as bad student, only bad teacher. Teacher say, student do.”* We must we teach everything correctly from the start. It is harder to correct a mistake or unlearn incorrect material. YOU are the one that is expected to know the material. Own it and you will be successful.

Be brave and exude confidence when in front of your students. Most of us have some level of anxiety that we mask (me included), but when it is time to go to work, we must not lose focus. Mr. Miyagi says it best: *“When you feel life out of focus, always return to basic of life.”* And he starts breathing in through his nose and out through his mouth. He is reminding us that as long as we are breathing, we can get through anything. We just sometimes have to remember that. One way to help students who are struggling is to remind them to breathe. Fear and anxiety exist in every one of us, and we must face it and not lose to it. Or, as Mr. Miyagi continues: *“It’s ok to lose to opponent. Must not lose to fear.”* He says this during Daniel’s final fight in the championship when he admits to Mr. Miyagi that he is afraid. He is reminded that he shouldn’t let fear win. If you exude that attitude during your course, and instill that frame of mind in your students, it will go more smoothly and be so much more fun. Remember that.

Once you have mastered the material and become the best around, remember a few key things. One, *“If come from inside you, always right one,”* referring to self-confidence and self-realization. When you bring out the enjoyment that you have for public safety cycling and share it with the students, you will infect them and receive it back ten-fold. Two, you must commit 100% to the material and to your instruction. As Mr. Miyagi puts it: *“Walk on road, hm? Walk left side, safe. Walk right side, safe. Walk middle, sooner or later (squishing gesture), get squish just like grape. Here, karate same thing. Either you karate do ‘yes’ or karate do ‘no’. You karate do, ‘guess so,’ (squishing gesture) just like grape. Understand?”* You must go all in. Third, always be prepared for obstacles and have a plan to overcome them. As the motto of Miyagi-Do Karate states: *“When the fight comes to you, you have to be ready to fight back.”*

In closing, you are the ambassadors for our organization. You have been entrusted with the best and most complete material for instruction in the field of public safety cycling. Trust the process and seek guidance from others in order to put out the best product possible. Be confident that you have the ability and the know-how to present the material provided and you will be the best...around! And finally, remember this: *“You IPMBA yes, or you IPMBA no. You IPMBA guess-so, and you will get squished just like grape.”*

Thomas joined the Norman Police Department in 2009. He is currently assigned to night shift patrol and is the training coordinator and instructor for the bike team. He has been active with IPMBA since 2011, after taking the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course. He was certified as PCI in 2013 at the IPMBA Conference in Baton Rouge and cross-trained as an EMSCI in 2017. He became an Instructor Trainer in 2019, attended the Bicycle Response Team Training in 2020, and was BRT Instructor certified in 2021. He currently serves on the IPMBA Board of Directors overseeing education programs. He can be reached at Thomas.Zermeno@yahoo.com.

(Continued from page 1)
 carry this as baggage throughout their lives. The mental trauma experienced determines the level of encumbering psychological residue. It is a sliding scale, but at some point along the continuum, it reaches beyond mental baggage and enters the horrific and debilitating realm of post-traumatic stress disorder. But make no mistake, all combat veterans carry a lasting, indelible imprint of the horror of war.

The condition is persistent. I have met Vietnam War veterans who get chills talking about their experiences even now. I have seen World War II veterans — American, British, German — become choked with emotion discussing their wartime experience as much as 60 years later. This residue of war is no modern phenomenon: It is universal and timeless. It is a dark gift that keeps giving for the lifetime of the veteran.

For this combat veteran, it means:

- Carrying the knowledge, always, that I killed or was a party to the killing of other humans, regardless of their status as the enemy.
- Feeling an almost out-of-body experience when a pair of fighter jets fly over. I am mentally transported

PTSD: HELP FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

If someone close to you has experienced a traumatic event, it can be hard to know how to support them. There are several ways you can help your loved one strengthen your relationship, and take care of yourself too.

FOR YOU

- Take care of your own health.
- Continue doing the things you enjoy and find relaxing.
- Spent time with family and friends.
- Read a book.
- Exercise.
- Spent time in nature.
- Alcohol.
- Be realistic about how much you can do.
- Talk about what you're going through with your own support network.
- Consider seeing a counselor or therapist.

FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

- Plus enjoyable activities with friends and family.
- Offer to go to the doctor with them.
- Make a crisis plan - together.
- Check in with them often.
- Be a good listener.
- Consider VA's **Creating Safe Care** program for support in getting your loved one into treatment.

HELP YOUR LOVED ONE THROUGH TREATMENT

- Be patient.
- Offer practical help.
- Offer to research treatments your loved one.
- Call to schedule appointments.
- Let them share as they see pain.
- Keep checking in with them during and after treatment.
- Remind them that PTSD Treatment Works.

Good Understanding PTSD: A Guide for Family and Friends to help them about PTSD

- Download the free online **PTSD Family Guide** to get tips on how you can help your loved one with PTSD.
- Use the **caregiver support program** for learning and making sure your loved one is getting the best care.
- Your **Abroad** ask us how much about PTSD and treatment from overseas and how best care.

For more information, visit www.ptsd.va.gov

WHAT IS PTSD?

Posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is a mental health concern that some people develop after they see or experience a traumatic event.

6% of the U.S. population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.

What it's like to have PTSD may be different for everyone. There are four types of PTSD symptoms.

Reliving or re-experiencing the event

- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Triggers

Avoidance

- Avoiding crowds
- Avoiding certain smells, lights, or sounds
- Avoiding talking or thinking about the event

Hyperarousal or being on guard

- Being jittery or overly alert
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Feeling angry or irritable

Negative changes in beliefs and feelings

- Losing interest in things you used to enjoy
- Feeling guilty or ashamed
- Unable to trust others

Do you have PTSD Symptoms?

- Answer 5 questions to see if your thoughts and feelings are related to PTSD: www.ptsd.va.gov/screen
- Learn about and compare effective treatment options using the PTSD Treatment Decision Aid: www.ptsd.va.gov/decisionaid
- Explore the National Center for PTSD website for information, videos, and tools to help manage PTSD: www.ptsd.va.gov

back to a desperate fight when the jets flew in so low that the afterburners burned my gunner's neck. I shiver as I return to reality, although the temperature is above 90 degrees.

- Admitting that I cannot watch war movies any longer. They make me too uncomfortable.
- Dreaming I am back in the war zone. In my dreams, it always looks different, but I always wake up agitated and disquieted just the same.
- Rolling out of bed aching and broken from "military wear and tear," knowing that the Department of Veterans Affairs will never acknowledge my pain.
- Suggesting my son play motorsport or fantasy video games. The sound and the realism of the military games make me edgy.
- Avoiding large crowds because I cannot trust my behavior if I am pressed too closely.
- Finding, in quiet moments, that images and memories of war creep back, at first in tableau but moving rapidly to the forefront of my mind. Sometimes I must physically shake my head to clear the thoughts.
- Realizing that I am, at some part of my core, a violent person capable of startling acts. This realization humbles and frightens me.

- Feeling my eyes well when I discuss some emotionally powerful events from the war, no matter how many times I have mentioned them before. Eventually, I stopped talking about them to avoid the reaction.

- Living my days having prepared for death, accepted that fact and then survived anyway. This changes the fabric of your existence for the rest of your life.

- Dreading the Fourth of July fireworks because they sound so much like a mortar attack.

- Discovering I no longer want to hunt or fire guns, although I did both most of my life.

- Restraining myself from registering my disgust whenever a non-veteran informs me how a war really ought to be fought.

- Seeing a sunrise for what it is: a splendid gift I should not still be alive to witness.

Writing this was cathartic. I hope reading it is, as well. Please continue showing your gratitude to the veterans you meet. It means much to have our service acknowledged and appreciated. And remember that when you thank combat veterans for their service, you bestow recognition for demons they willingly shoulder for us all.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PTSD TREATMENT FOR YOU

LEARN ABOUT PTSD TREATMENT

- TRAUMA-FOCUSED THERAPIES** are the most effective PTSD treatment. They focus specifically on the memory of the traumatic event or its meaning.
- ANTIDEPRESSANT MEDICATIONS** can also be used to treat PTSD. Though they may not cure the problem, they can reduce the symptoms.

Learn more about these and other treatments: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand_tz/ta_basics.asp

COMPARE TREATMENT OPTIONS

Think about your preferences when comparing treatment options. Consider:

- Is it effective?
- How long does treatment last?
- How are the risks?
- Group or individual?
- Will I talk about my trauma?
- Will I have homework?

Create a personalized treatment chart to compare your options: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/decisionaid>

TAKE ACTION TO START TREATMENT

Talk with your provider about your treatment preferences. Ask questions. For example:

- Do you think the treatment is a good fit for me?
- What can I expect during therapy?
- How soon will I start to feel better?
- When can I start?

Print your customized summary from the PTSD Treatment Decision Aid and share it with your provider: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/decisionaid>

PTSD VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

by Eric Donoho, Baltimore Sun

This Op-Ed appeared in the May 19, 2019, issue of the Baltimore Sun.

In the past year and a half, two dozen veterans have died by suicide on the premises of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility — three within one five-day period last month — causing the veteran suicide epidemic to once again garner national attention.

As a veteran who has lost 14 friends to suicide and as someone who sat at the kitchen table with a Glock in my mouth trying to end my own life, I know first-hand why addressing this issue is so important. We all need to remember one thing: This is about a choice to get on dying or get on living, and our job is to convince these veterans that living is the best choice.

We do that through inspiring veterans with facts and stories, and by helping them see that it is possible to lead a purpose-driven sustainable life even with all the challenges that war has brought them.

I spent almost seven years on the sidelines of life. I had been diagnosed with PTSD and medically retired from the Army. I began believing the stereotypes that come with the diagnosis. I believed that I was broken. Year after year, that negative perception of myself wore me down until I hit rock bottom and attempted to end my life.

It was the combination of my first platoon sergeant's suicide, which I learned about a few days after my own attempt, and watching "Rocky VI" that same night that caused me to have an epiphany.

Rocky said, "...it ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward." Life had knocked me down so many times that I had just stopped getting back up.

With my eyes open and a determination to change my life, I realized that in order for me to overcome the stigmas that held me back, I would need to educate myself about PTSD. I previously believed that I was somehow weaker than my friends, which in reality was not the case. I had also not taken my mild traumatic brain injury seriously, not realizing the role it played in my development of PTSD. Learning these things empowered me to start making the tough behavioral changes associated with confronting PTSD.

For five months I noticed positive progress, but I still found it difficult to trust and let go of control. I was stalling in my recovery. During a conversation with a friend, he said: "You just have to have faith in humanity. Faith in the goodness of the human spirit." That moment I realized my faith in humanity had become a casualty of war.

Shortly after, I learned the term "moral injury." Moral injury is the damage to one's conscience when that person perpetrates, witnesses or fails to prevent acts that transgress one's own moral beliefs, values or ethical code of conduct. My trust and control issues were deeply rooted in my own moral injury, but armed with information, I felt empowered once again to keep moving forward.

Over three years later, I have climbed out of a massive hole and rejoined society, leading a purpose-driven, sustainable life. I created a business and have found a calling in public speaking. I advocate for veterans' issues on Capitol Hill as a member of the Iraq Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), while also helping develop a new and innovative program for veterans struggling to find their path, called ROC Warriors. Not every day is perfect, and there are always the bad ones. While I can't change the past, I have changed how I react to it.

Over the coming weeks Congress will hold more hearings to gather more evidence on what we should be doing as a country to overcome this crisis, but hearings are not action and we need urgent action. One thing the VA and Congress could do immediately is to use the \$4.7 million that went unused in last year's VA Suicide Awareness program to develop a campaign highlighting the stories of veterans who have found redemption.

It is more important than ever to highlight veterans' stories who have found their way from the darkness, helping educate everyone about the realities of PTSD and giving veterans hope and a path forward. Eventually, enough light will surround this issue that veterans will feel just as proud of overcoming this battle as they were of the ones they fought and won while at war.

Eric Donoho (Twitter: @ericbdonoho) is a freelance photographer, public speaker, and advocate for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

INTERNATIONAL POLICE MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

Interested in submitting an article? Interested in advertising in *IPMBA News*?
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