

Press Release



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For Release: May 15

Headline: **Local ‘Ride of Silence’ evening of May 18th**

What began nine years ago in Dallas as a spontaneous outpouring of grief for a friend and fellow rider, struck and killed by the mirror of a passing vehicle, has rolled across the globe to become an international annual event memorializing and honoring cyclists who have been injured and killed while riding.

The many hundreds of events share the same goals: “To honor fallen cyclists, to promote road safety, and to make a difference.”

Bike safety is not a fleeting issue, especially here in Florida which ranks the very worst in the nation for cyclist safety with the highest fatality rate six years in a row. Just within the past two months, here in Lee County four cyclists have been killed in crashes with automobiles.

This year’s local “Ride of Silence” is giving special recognition to two of those riders, Janet Rae LoFranco and Tracey Kleinpell.

LoFranco, 59, was struck and killed in Estero on Feb. 20, 2011, leaving behind Ron, her husband of 30 years; two adult children, Justin and Jacqueline; and a first grandchild expected in early June. Janet, who loved all outdoor activities, was an experienced and avid cyclist, riding for pleasure and exercise. Kleinpell, 46, also a veteran cyclist and triathlete, was killed by a driver while cycling across the Sanibel Causeway. Tracey’s husband, Gordon, was riding with her when the driver crossed the centerline, resulting in Tracey’s tragic death. Both of these fatalities were preventable and unnecessary.

The Ride of Silence, in memorializing riders injured and killed, seeks to draw motorist’s attention to cyclist’s legal rights to full use of the roadways, to inform motorists that we are

here, to watch for us – as if our lives depended on it. Locally there will be two Rides of Silence both departing at 7:00 p.m. Please come out to show your support and send the message that we deserve our right to operate on our own roads. We are not just bike riders but friends and neighbors and we must all **Share the Road**.

Fort Myers: Caloosa Riders is organizing a ride in downtown Fort Myers. It starts at Centennial Park, 2000 W. First St., Fort Myers (under the bridge at Heitman and Bay Streets). The ride will be 8 miles at 10-12 mph. For information, contact riderinfo@caloosariders.org, or www.caloosariders.org.

Bonita Springs: The Bonita Bay Bicycle Club's ride starts from "Riverwalk Park" within Bonita Bay. It will be a 10 mph ride, about one hour long, within Bonita Bay, escorted by BB security vehicles. Non-residents of Bonita Bay are welcome, and must contact Claude Weir, BBBC President, at least a day in advance to be cleared at the gate: cwesq@earthlink.net.

Note: that all riders must wear a helmet.