

Urquides wins Golden Helmet Award

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(Photo: Provided Photo by TAMC staff, Theresa Wright)

Miranda Urquides, 16, smiled widely while accepting the Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) Golden Helmet Award on behalf of all 38 members of the Salinas High School Mountain Bike Team on Wednesday. This award is not given for winning races, although the team was undefeated in the regional races and placed third in the state, but for the public service that the team gives to bicycling.

"They volunteer their services with middle school students," stated Theresa Wright, TAMC Community Outreach Coordinator, at the May 24 TAMC awards ceremony, "they build new trails and they are stewards of the trails by not skidding, they are responsible, we want to recognize them as citizens of our community."

Fellow Cowboy Mountain Bike Team riders Anker Courtright, Alison O'Dell, and Brad Campbell were with Urquides at the award ceremony, as well as head Coach Jeff Lindenthal.

"Miranda Urquides is a real spark plug for our team, she is always willing to help out where needed," Coach Lindenthal said, "she helps with the Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day as well as our trail building work."

The above mentioned Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day, sponsored by Monterey Off Road Cycling Association (MORCA), was honored in the event category at the awards event Wednesday. This day is held every October in Toro Park as a means for kids and their families to enjoy local trails together.

Lauryn Ricigliano, who was there to accept the award for a group on behalf of Families of Color Monterey County, said that she was inspired to start family biking events when "We went to the Take a Kid Mountain Biking day, and we wondered why there weren't more events like that," Ricigliano said.

"This is a group that is dedicated to making cycling accessible and affordable," Theresa Wright said when presenting the award to Families of Color Monterey County, "they run a bike camp, offer scholarships to families that cannot afford the bike camp, and hold monthly family rides and incorporate bicycling into their daily lives." The monthly family rides often have a social justice theme. " For the family ride for Black History month [February], we had 25 in attendance, Ricigliano said, " and for Women's History month [March], we had 15."

The individual award went to Mike Baroni of Green Pedal Couriers, who provides free bike valet services at community events, thus making it safe and possible to bicycle to that event.

These are the first TAMC Golden Helmet award given in five years, since 2012, TAMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee revived the award as part of the celebration of May as Bike Month.

Bicycle Sharing Feasibility study ignored

In 2012 consultant agencies were paid \$58K of grant money to do a study on the feasibility of implementing a Bike Share program in Monterey County. The study was funded by a grant from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, and the report seems to have been forgotten by the TAMC Board.

The summary of the final report, which was present to the TAMC Board on February 8, 2013, states "TAMC has requested a Bicycle Sharing Feasibility and Implementation Plan for a bike sharing system in Monterey County that increases the use of bicycles for relatively short-range travel, reducing the negative impacts of private automobile use and encouraging a shift to other modes of transportation.." The 95 page report, rich in detail, recommends two bike-sharing systems, one in the Monterey/Pacific Grove area and one in Salinas.

When I spoke to Eric Petersen, who was chair of the TAMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee in 2012-13, he said the discussion of bike sharing was dropped because the private bike rental companies on the peninsula did not want a bike share program. But what about Salinas?

Lindenthal, the head coach of the Salinas High Mountain Bike Team, said about bike share "I think it is a really good idea, and well suited to our area," Lindenthal said, "I don't think it would take away from the bicycle shops, and in fact it can bring more folks to bicycling in the long run."

What use, if any, was made of this \$58,000 study?

Send your comments and question to MacGregor Eddy (Goya) wecouldcarless@gmail.com.

