

2009-11 Focus on Members

Our Focus this month is on Karen Baldino, a 23 year veteran of the PFW.

What a multitude of great experiences & memories the club has given me in the last 2 years short of a quarter century! Thru the years I've met wonderful people, ridden & led rides in every category & distance from a 20 mi D to a 100 mi AX; in weather from a 100 degree hot, humid & sunny day to a 9 degree cold, cloudy morning. I've had hail & sleet pierce my face, & my tires in contact with snow on the road. I have been the victim of black ice & wet RR tracks.

My first club ride was Chris Cook's "Son of Crosswicks" ride leaving from downtown Crosswicks. Tho every pace was available to ride, I wound up getting dropped by the whole group. Two years later, in 1988, I placed first in the Women's category of the Franklin Township Biathlon, & several years after that I placed second in my age group at the NJ Road Race Championship & won first place in my age group in the Colts Neck Road Race. I couldn't have done it without learning drafting techniques from Ed Post & eating & drinking all that pizza & beer with Don Sprague at "Take It Easy" after the Tuesday night rides!

Ken Sharples & I once rode 100 miles together after everyone bowed out because they thought it would rain; it turned out to be a beautiful, sunny day. While racing/struggling up Goat Hill Road, I never knew the summit would someday become my home! I used to wonder how Norman Batho could ride so hard for so long. I always hoped he would tire out before me. On the Cranbury evening rides, Bob Wszolek would give me the nod to "hop on", & we would take off. What a great wheel to be on! When one of my pedals froze on a ride, George Sosna rode my bike home for almost 20 miles while I rode his better equipped bike that had 2 working pedals. It always paid to be a female on rides dominated by men!

With the help & dedication of volunteers, I ran the PFW Time Trials every summer for several years back in the late 80s & early 90s. That was when CR 524 was less traveled. I still have the articles published in the Princeton Packet & Trenton Times where George



Foradori was headlined a winner. From 2001-2003, the town's Recreation Director & I ran the USCF sanctioned Washington Township Classic. The winner of the men's race in 2001 was Marty Nordstein, an Olympic gold-medalist! That was a great first race to run!

In '02 TEAM NAVY participated.

I served as Ride Captain in '87 & became Treasurer in '88 for . . . well, several years. That was back when Dick Bograd, club founder, was president & Barbara Hunt delivered all the dues to me. Mike & Phyllis Suber were on the Board then & I don't believe they have taken any time off since! I also met some life-long friends during that time - Johnny "G" Gianiodis (the best hill climber in the late 80's!), Carl Newmeyer (my trainer), Lloyd Pietrak & Charlotte Fuller, Barb Plunkett & Sharon LaRossa. Additionally, through the PFW I've met my neighbor & friend, Kate Buttolph, who has become quite a cyclist! As the present ride sheet collector, it is always a pleasure to see the names of old-timers as well as new riders.

I thank the PFW for many great years of cycling & camaraderie with people who participate in what I believe to be the best sport in the world! & I look forward to being part of the club for years to come.