

20116-03 Focus On Members: Bob Smith

Bob Smith has been a long-time volunteer for Bike Exchange, as well as PFW ride leader. He recently moved to Florida and now rides with the Florida PFW chapter.



Early memories of bicycling include the triumph of graduating from training wheels, to the agony of falling on the biggest hill in our neighborhood, a mere bump, resulting in seven stitches to my left thigh. My first long distance ride at age eight was a seven miler from our house in Hamilton to my grandparents' house at the Brunswick Circle. They weren't home but I managed to get inside and, being exhausted, telephone my parents to ask for a ride home. That was a big mistake. My first Free Wheeler memory was seeing Frank Stanski and Joan Prinz on local TV talking about the new bike club they had formed. It sounded like fun so I joined. I enjoyed weekend rides, mostly with Norman Batho, and really felt like a full fledged member of the club when my wife, Meg, and I joined the annual PFW trip to Martha's Vineyard. My inaugural Vineyard ride was notable. I

departed with Frank Stanski and several others for a 30 miler at 9am, promising to join Meg, who didn't ride, for lunch. Upon my tardy return at 2:30pm I found Meg very hungry and rather unhappy. I quickly related my excuse: Frank had designed three strategic rest stops for the ride, first at the best chowder hut on the island, second at the best ice cream shop on the island, and third at the best doughnut shop on the island. Biking with Frank, we realized, would not make me skinny. Since my retirement in 2002 I have enjoyed cycling more and more. In 2006 I participated in The Longest Day ride, from the northern tip of New Jersey to Cape May. Our group of nine logged 212 miles that day in 90 degree heat and a ten mile an hour headwind. What fun!

Cycling for me lately has become more of a social event. I enjoy the camaraderie of the Team Social Security, Honey Do, and hill rides in Hunterdon and Somerset counties. Friends from these and other rides have joined me for several years on PFW trips to Lake Luzerne in the Adirondacks. I have also been happy to participate in a weekly golf foursome and a monthly book club with other PFW friends. For the past several years I have enjoyed purchasing PFW Event food and supplies with Ira Saltiel, storing and sorting them in our garage, and distributing them to other rest stop and Sag Wagon volunteers the night before the Event. Membership in the Club also lead me to become a charter member of the Bike Exchange, where I have been able to meet a great new group of friends and work for a very worthy cause in the Boys and Girls Club of Trenton & Mercer County. During the past seven years we have been able to raise over \$580,000 for the Boys and Girls Club and recycle more than 12,000 bicycles into our community. Last year was my most productive in terms of miles, finishing with just over 7,300. This year finds me enjoying cycling with the Southwest Florida Freewheelers in Naples and Marco Island. We seem to be adding more members by the month, so pack up your bike, your swimsuit and your fishing pole and come on down to join us!