

2011-12 Focus on Members

This month's Focus is on John Waltz – Cyclist, Advocate & Volunteer extraordinaire.

On the first day I learned to balance a 2 wheel bike (with some help from Dad), I rode my cousin's bike back and forth on a short, narrow stretch of dirt road in Rupert, PA 'till my retinal rods were taxed to the limit. The next time I got to ride - some years later, I got lost after dark in the neighborhood of friends we were visiting in Newark, DE. I was clearly a bike junkie from the start.

Years later, our parents bought me & my sibs new Schwinn bikes. I rode that heavy black single speed Typhoon for about 6 years. At some point I

turned the handlebars upside down and rotated forward to make it more aero (just like my most recent bike - a black aluminum fixie. Talk about coming full circle!). I rode that bike on a 7.5 mile circuit around a nearby NYC water supply reservoir more times than I can count. It was the greatest accomplishment to finally be able to pedal up the hill of our street and then our steep driveway without stopping.

While in high school, my good buddy, Sax (the guy I blame for getting me into cycling as a serious lifestyle and budgetary consideration) persuaded me to borrow another friends' Fuji to take on a day trip. Getting buzzed by vehicles on a stretch of CT highway was not the most fun. But rather than deter us, it taught us to ride straight! Before long, I bought a fancy bike in a NYC shop. We did our first Century together just by meandering with the wind and terrain to New Haven, CT with the return trip ahead of us. Summers home from College I began to ride with the New York Cycle Club Westchester contingent on weekends, which was my introduction to Club riding. A great bunch of folks. This was my sport.

Moving to NJ in '82, I soon found the CJBC and another great bunch of people. Through the '80's, I / we rode over 50,000 miles, I became a League of American Wheelmen life member and Effective Cycling Instructor, produced a Safe Bicycling slide show, rode the first Longest Day rides and after a couple times convened a round trip High-Point to Cape May weekend tour (ride to High Point Friday, to Cape May on Sat. and back home on Sunday). We attended numerous GEAR's (Great Eastern American Rally) sponsored by LAW (now LAB). As a PFW member, I coordinated the route markings for GEAR Princeton '85. (The ubiquitous Dashing Dan Rappoport's picture is in the LAB magazine article for

that event). In the late 90's I gave up tubular (sew-up) tires for clinchers and never looked back. Fast forward to 2004 and the most memorable of my cycling experiences; my daughter (then 11 years) and I shared a self-contained 700 mile tandem bike trip thru the Midwest following the



Adventure Cycling Lewis & Clark Trail, plus an overnight canoe trip down the Missouri R. What an adventure!

Over the years I've been involved with a number of NJ bicycling advocacy organizations, meeting many enthusiastic, dedicated people along the way. Proudly, we chalked up a number of successes to advance bicycling for sport, recreation and transportation. In the late '90's I chaired the Princeton Boro Bicycling Advisory Committee then earlier this century, worked on facilities planning and design statewide and taught a bunch of safe seminars & courses.

These days I still love cycling and am thrilled to ride with the great folks of PFW. New people are continually coming to the sport. I also love volunteering as a mechanic and mechanic trainer at the Trenton Bike Exchange as well as helping out the folks of West Windsor BPA in events. Looking back, I've been cycling for more than 40 years and hope to be riding ride in another 40. Gee, that now 4 year old "last bike I'll ever buy" just might not be my last bike . . . Tailwinds.