

# 2012-03 Focus on Members

**Our focus this month is on John Danek, one of our self described Kings of the Mountains. . . and a mountain biker at heart!**

But it wasn't always so. "My story with the bike is like many other members - I was in my mid-30s and overweight. When my brother was diagnosed with diabetes, I finally ran over to K-Mart and bought a Huffy and started riding it. That changed my life." Over fifteen years later, we cannot imagine John ever not being the climber that he is today.



The Huffy didn't last long before John upgraded to a Raleigh mountain bike. John started riding the trails at Mercer County Park. Soon he met others who shared

his love for mountain biking - Dale Bryant and Ernie Thompson - who happened to be members of the PFW. John's skills and fitness increased to where he was

soon racing, but as he says "I don't train in the rain". The lure of the the trails for me is the beauty of the forest, the camaraderie of fellow MTBers and the

challenge of tackling a difficult trail or obstacle." John still leads winter MTB rides for the club. "All you need to join one of my MTB rides is a Mountain Bike in good condition." John chooses the location and trails based on the skill level of the riders who join him, so don't be shy if you are curious about mountain biking.

John's PFW mountain biking friends soon encouraged him to try road riding too. Like Cadel Evans, the mountain biker took to the road and quickly became a familiar face on B+ rides. By 1999 he had his first Pinarello and the rest is history. John was soon leading hill rides out of Princeton High School, the famous PHD ("Pound Hills Daily") rides. In 2001, John conquered the Col du Tourmalet and met Lance Armstrong on a trip that followed the Tour de France from the Pyrenees to Paris. John continued his summers in the hills, becoming a fixture on the Tuesday Rocky Hill Raiders rides and the Sunday morning East Amwell rides with Jack Palis and Peter Harnett. John always has a smile of encouragement for you as he watches you get to the top of the climb.

Always looking for a new cycling experience, John admired John Powers' simple and elegant fixed gear bike. In 2008, John got his own fixie, a Specialized Langster New York. This bright Yellow bike has become known as "The TAXI". Thus began "Captain Jack's Fixie Fleet". A solid group of PFW'ers who had or acquired these simple bikes joined the fleet, and as a result Fixie PFW rides began showing up for some winter spins at a social pace with geared bikes always welcome. "I love the quiet of riding a fixie. Long winter fixie rides with

friends in Hunterdon or Bucks County are incredibly beautiful experiences." At last

summer's PFW Event, after a morning of volunteering at registration, John led a

group of eight fixies out for the first ever Fixie (metric) Century. Not bad with one

gear and no coasting!

In addition to leading road, mountain and fixie rides for the PFW, John also served as the Club's Second VP - Ride Captain, Ride Sheet coordinator, Chairperson for the Route Painting committee on 3 Princeton Events, co-authored the PFW Ride Leader's Guide, and developed the Hilly routes for past Princeton Events and

Tour de Cures.

John is truly a rider for all seasons, with a different bike for each season. When asked which of his eight bikes is his favorite, John replied "Bridget. She's a 1985 red Bridgestone that we pulled out of the trash. I set her up as a single speed with an old mountain bike handlebar from the Pearl (29er MTB), head and tail lights, Brooks saddle and a matching wine carrier. She's my ride out to dinner in Princeton on hot summer nights."