

2013-02 Focus on Members

Our focus this month is on Lynne Weiss, accomplished cyclist and welcome participant on many PFW rides.

Its 2007. I look at the bike I rode BC (before children) in

Philly and Chicago. The longest distances were under

20 miles, along the flat, but scenic lake front in Chicago.

Maybe I'll ride again. The bike had languished around the garage for years. The cost to get into riding

condition turned out to be more than the bike was

worth. If I put the money into a new one, will I use it?

Spring 2008, I finally was able to arrange my schedule a go for "bike fitting". It happened to be on my birthday. My life has not been the same since.

My friend Beth started riding about a year before. "You ride how many miles?" It didn't seem possible to do 30-40 miles or more at once. She told me about bike clubs. I joined PFW and learned the basics of group riding, and hills. I vividly recall the first time a friend patiently coached me up Coppermine, and I slowly inched up to the top . It wasn't long before I understood the prediction "You will schedule

your life around riding". By the end of that first summer , I rode my first "century". At the 50 mile rest stop, I double checked that I had the SAG information, thinking I would never make it back. What elation to finish! I didn't know enough not to do the Ramapo rally as my first, especially since I rode mainly in the "flats" until then.

Riding with the club, I've seen scenic NJ I didn't know existed. "What, & where are the Sourlands?" Though I have lived in the area for many years, I'd never heard of them previously! Cycling gives you a different perspective of the landscape. I

have had an opportunity to cycle in states along the north east, and even into

Canada (at least for a few miles-thanks again Tom). What a great way to travel.

About the same time I began riding, I made a very overdue decision to make a major change in my life. Cycling became an effective stress reliever and was one of the things that helped me get through some of the difficult days. But it doesn't need to be emotional event to feel the benefits of riding. One beautiful summer weekday I managed to run out of the office in time to make one of Ira's evening rides. On the way home, I felt a bit disoriented. What day was it? It felt like I had been on vacation that day! Maybe its the endorphin surge that motivates me to get up early on a weekend or holiday and to struggle up the hills.



I am always ready to extol the benefits of riding. I don't know if I had any influence, but now two of my three children, some of their friends, and my brother started riding. In the few years I have been in the saddle, I have also learned of too many of the dangers. The pins and wires in my elbow are a memento of an encounter I had with the road. I hope that is the most serious accident I ever have.

There are the many physical and psychological benefits of cycling. But even more important are the people I have met, and the ways they have enriched my life. I can't thank enough all of the ride leaders, those that have organized cycling trips, and all of the cyclist who have made rides more than just pedaling. No matter where I have cycled, I have met wonderful, interesting, supportive, diverse, fun and friendly people, many whom I now call friends.

You can ride for exercise, for its other benefits to you, but there are many opportunities to ride to help others. A phrase I heard during a speech on a "Battle Against Hunger" charity ride (it's a great event, for riders of all levels, for a needed cause, organized and ridden by an amazing group of people – do it!) has stuck with me and I pass on to all: "Do what you love and use it to help others".

Work for a greener New Jersey. See you on the road.

Lynne