

2015-04 Focus On Members

Our Focus this month is on Ron Mittelstaedt, Frequent Ride Leader and Happy Guy.

I've always rode bikes. In my younger days for transportation and for a newspaper route. A Schwinn crusier with coaster brakes bought at the original Knapps bike shop in Trenton.

After our marriage, my wife and I bought Raleigh Sport three speeds purchased at Knapp's Olden Ave. in Ewing. We would ride them on the Delaware-Raritan canal path and I would ride mine to work, about five miles each way.

After many miles on the canal path I thought it was time to learn to ride on the road with a group.

That's when I contacted the Free Wheelers. I was first contacted by John Powers who answered all my questions. I then decided to take my first road ride with Kyle Nylander on Columbus Day five years ago.

I still remember that first ride. Kyle had taken us on some dirt roads and across a bridge with barricades blocking the entrance. There were holes through the flooring of the bridge, which we cautiously crossed. My first impression of a PFW road ride wasn't very favorable. I rode many more times with Kyle and that first impression faded and turned into very enjoyable memories. I received many useful tips from him and was grateful for them.

I tried many other rides with different ride leaders. On one occasion I attended a ride out of Hightstown led by Joe B. I was surprise to see the late Joe McBride in attendance. Joe's children and mine grew up together and played on the same high school sports teams. After our kids graduated high school we lost touch with each other until this ride. Did a lot of catching up.

On several occasions I rode on the tri county cruise out of the YMCA on Saw Mill Road, Hamilton. I enjoy the scenery of Burlington and Monmouth counties. I was mostly riding with Pat Van Hise's C+ and Sue Moser's B rides. To this day Sue and I have shared many club and charity rides together and I can always depend on her to ride with me when conditions aren't suitable for others. That second year I attended ninety-six rides from different locations with different ride leaders. During spring, summer, and fall of that year I was riding an average of four times a week.

On one ride Pat Van Hise asked me to become a ride leader. I was a bit apprehensive because the position involved planning ride routes. I bought a Garmin Edge GPS and used "Ride With GPS" web program, which made the route planning rather easy. I still sometimes make a wrong turn, but always get



back on the route after a few more turns.

I also lead a beginner's ride out of Knapp's Cyclery in Lawrence Township. I enjoy sharing tips of road riding, sort of giving back what so many have taught me.

I have read that the mark of a true cyclist is one whose bike is worth more than his car. My old 1993 Toyota Corolla (behind me in the photo) has a permanent bike rack installed. The vehicle probably isn't worth much but it gets me around to the different ride locations. Ride on - Ron