

2016 -01 Focus On Members Eileen & Stephen Traum

Eileen and Stephen Traum – former runner turned cyclist and members since 2009 with global cycling experience, and now becoming a ride leader.



In 1987 Eileen and I booked a cycling vacation with a company called Bicycle France in the Loire Valley. We bought two Trek bicycles from Frank, whose store was on the second floor of a house in Highland Park, N.J. and all the guys seemed to have PHD's in bikes. We started getting ready for our trip by riding a few miles around the block hoping that would be enough to get in shape.

Upon arriving in Anjou, France, we were fitted with bikes and gear and got ready for an afternoon warm-up ride. Impatient with the slow pace of the ride, Steve shot ahead, hit a curb, bent his wheel, went down and got bandaged up as he waited at a cafe for the sag wagon to fix his bike and get him going again. Now, Eileen, continuing on, gets separated from the group with no map, no money and no French except for "ou est la toilette?". After pedaling past the French countryside all afternoon, she somehow found her way back to the hotel by 7PM, where Steve was out front pacing the pavement and worried they would also miss dinner.

In spite of that inauspicious start, we thoroughly enjoyed a vacation that mixed exercise, great food and beautiful scenery all in one. For the next two years we biked in Napa Valley, Vermont, Bordeaux, Switzerland and Maine and then suddenly put our bikes in mothballs for the next two decades.

Finally, in 2009, we decided to try cycling locally and bought a Specialized Roubaix for me and a Ruby for Eileen and joined Princeton Free Wheelers cycling club. After one or two rides of trying to keep up and learning how to ride in a group, I was really struggling and mentally questioning whether or not this was a smart idea. But lucky, for me, team Social Security came to the rescue and kept me going with tremendous encouragement and camaraderie. I began to soak up anything from them about cycling that I could and learned technique from Georgio F. and determination and grit from Erich W., both of which have sadly passed on. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Dennis, Al P., Al I., Ira, Ernie, Spence, Howie and many others who kept me going. I now consider myself primarily a cyclist and not a runner any more and my only regret is discovering the joys of biking at such a late age.

Each year our biking season is extended as we accumulate more cold weather gear. When I started, if I rode once a week it was a lot and now I look forward to riding 5 - 6

days per week, weather permitting. As I got stronger, though many would say not much better, I met other members such as Dave, Gary, Peter, Ric, Ralph and Bob W. and many others who continue to impart knowledge as well as challenge me to keep improving. Of special note is the fact that on December 5th, I will be leading a ride for the very first time and hopefully get all who attend safely back on the same day. Eileen and I hope to continue riding into the sunset for many years to come.