

2016-09

Member In Focus: John Kramarz



When I told my dad I wanted a bicycle he asked, "Why? You'll be driving in another year." I was always good at acknowledging the obstacles to goals, then taking a deep breath and going for them anyway. I got a silver Raleigh. By college, my Raleigh Reliant became a Lotus Classique. After college, I got back into riding on a new Lotus Legend when I started to work. I was tuned to "N+1" before it was a rule.

Two neighbors had blue and yellow DeRosa steel bikes and sometimes I'd tag along when they rode. I think they would hit 18 or 19, and to me they were like professionals! I always enjoyed riding alone, but riding with other people was something new, and something fun. Somehow I learned about the PFW and showed up for my first ride, or maybe I should call it a life lesson. I was about 25 and looking around the parking lot at a few guys with gray hair, some women, probably in their 40s. "Really? They're going to be amazed at me!" is probably what I thought. Hahaha! I learned the hard way that riding alone just does not prepare you for the sustained effort needed in a group of 5 or more. That ride was a good kick in the Assunpink. I was hooked!

As I progressed to the AX rides, I moved to a Serotta Colorado. I took a tour of the barn where they built them in Saratoga Springs. I was hooked. I picked up a Nova SpecialX as a "rain bike." Sometime around the mid-90s, I burned out. I forget if my bikes were in the basement or the garage, but they were out of my mind, and I fell out of shape. 2012 started as a bad year for me. The prior year had been very stressful as my mother's health deteriorated. When she passed in early 2012, I looked like I was next.

I turned back to the bike. I had a new purpose this time, rather than just fitness and myself. My family included my beautiful wife and two beautiful daughters, and a sweet Chihuahua. My youngest daughter, Kellie, was diagnosed at age 3 with Type One Diabetes. Several friends in the Diabetes community were into biking and they were talking about doing a Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation ride in Vermont that July. They encouraged me to go too. The ride would end up being life changing. I was asked to be a Coach for the Mid Jersey JDRF Chapter. I've enjoyed helping people find new depths to their endurance that they never knew they had. I just did the Vermont Ride again this summer, in wet weather. If you've read this far, you probably have the endurance to do one of our rides. Look us up at ride.JDRF.org. You can donate to a rider there too. My goal now is to keep riding until Type One is Type None!