

## 2017-04-Carol James



As a kid, I always loved riding my bike. I lived at the top of a hill and sought the thrill of coasting down that hill as fast as possible, and the challenge of riding up the hill as fast as possible. Yes, I was a zippity zoom. My sister and I would set up shop on the front lawn and clean our bikes and attach various implements to the spokes with the purpose of creating sound effects, such as baseball cards and water balloons. I would frequently feel inspired to combine ballet with riding by performing an arabesque (standing with one foot on the seat, with the other leg extended out behind, with one arm extended in front and the remaining arm holding the handle bar) as I rode down the street. As I grew older, bike riding was no

longer as “cool” as it was when I was younger.

I didn't return to biking until my late forties, when I cashed in some Marriott Reward points for an entry level Trek. The thrill of riding came rushing back to me except for the fact that I was now dealing with gears and hand brakes. But that did not stop my proverbial “need for speed” and I began tearing down roads, cutting through lots, and riding across fields as fast as I could. But alas, I just couldn't keep up with those sleek road bikes gliding down the road exerting much less effort than I was.

Enter my first road bike, a powder blue Giant OCR composite bought at Halter's when they were in South Brunswick. As soon as I figured out the shifting (it was a triple), how little effort it took to go around a hole in the road, and the speeds that I could get up to with half the effort, I would walk around saying, “I love my bike.”

I started riding with PFW shortly thereafter because I wanted to ride farther and feel the safety of riding with a group. Group riding was its own challenge and getting in and out of the shoe clips became imperative when riding in a group. My husband called me “Crash” the first year I was getting accustomed to my clip-ins. Joining PFW was one of the best decisions I've ever made. In the beginning, I rode at a B pace with Larry Goldsmith, Ken Leon, Ira Saltiel, Don Sprague, Dennis Whitney, and Bob Smith. My favorite rides of the year were the trips down to Belmar with Don Sprague, Joe McBride, Joe Miller, and Laura Lynch. I also went on many of the other club rides including the Pumpkin Patch Pedal, Farmlands Tour, Covered Bridge ride, and, of course, the PFW Event. The ultimate bike trip was the one I went on last year to Majorca with Bruce Kirschner and several other PFW members. That trip precipitated the purchase of the new love of my life, my pink Pinarello!

Now that I am retired, I am happy to be able to volunteer my time selling PFW Cycle Ware for members, as well as volunteering at the Trenton Bike Exchange several days a week. I eagerly look forward to riding with Team Social Security during the week, and other rides on the weekend. I get my need for speed fix trying to keep up with Al Lowich. For me, life will always be a great ride.