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I first started riding like many have, as a kid. Growing up in 1970's South Brunswick neighborhood, having an old 10 speed was my first taste of independence. It was also how most of us got to and from school. My first road rides were with a friend from the neighborhood. We would travel all the way to "Downtown" Monmouth Junction in search of hoagies, snacks and carbonated beverages that were not available at home. Cycling faded from my life once a car was needed for nearly anything and my old bike spent years hanging up in my parent's garage.

But after a move to Philadelphia for college, cycling again became my primary method of transportation. A recent purchase of a mountain bike became my go-to method to get back and forth from my graphic design studio, rain or shine. I'd even go to client presentations from time to time via bicycle.

After 10 years in the City of Brotherly Love, I moved to Yardley in 1999. I marveled at the Delaware Canal being a block away and the options it afforded me for purely recreational cycling. I'd regularly do canal loops to Washington Crossing or New Hope (and one particularly ambitious ride from Easton).

I only recently started road cycling (not counting my years navigating the streets of Philadelphia on a mountain bike). It started with a suggestion by my physician. Years ago, I was diagnosed with a rare neurological condition that causes stiffness and weakness in my legs). I had mentioned how cycling up and down the canal had been therapeutic. My neurologist was an avid cyclist himself. He suggested joining a riding group so I could take it more seriously, and that it could both relieve symptoms and protect my mobility. Some people with my condition eventually need canes or walkers to remain mobile, and I intend to do everything I can to remain on my feet.

I fondly remembered the PFW event I had participated back in 2002. I picked up a vintage road bike online and decided to join.

The time I've spent with the Freewheelers has been educational and motivational. I'm embarrassed to admit that I didn't know what a cycling pace was until I saw them listed on the group ride list. (Traveling 20 blocks in Philadelphia from my apartment to work, traffic was the limiting factor, not my speed). And I was never in a hurry, disappearing for hours on the tow path. Learning to safely ride on roads (and remembering to look in my mirror) was a major benefit from PFW group rides. I now make it a point to try and run errands via bike whenever possible.

In addition to the occasional group ride, I am known for taking bikes with me on vacations whenever possible. I visit the Adirondacks regularly and love the challenges that terrain offers. On a recent multi-family group trip to Virginia Beach, I failed to set foot once in the ocean, instead logging 200 miles on roads and park trails there. On day two, I heard the question "You're going on another bike ride?" and I had to laugh. (I brought all three of my bikes with me).

Riding has become both a therapy (and an addiction). I am so lucky that this form of physical therapy is something I love.