



**THE  
FREEWHEEL**

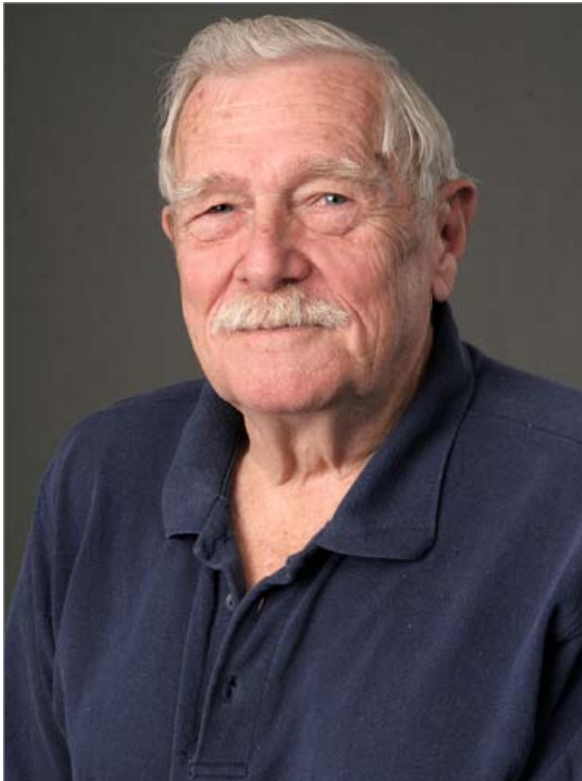


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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON FREE WHEELERS, INC.  
VOLUME XXX Addendum

FEBRUARY 2009

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**NORMAN ROY BATHO  
1932 - 2008**

## *Club Topics*

### **Fellow cyclists:**

When you receive this newsletter many of you will have already heard of Norm Batho's passing. John Powers and I spoke this morning and he wisely said it can be hard to put your feelings into words at these times but it is worth sharing memories. It turns out that what we remember are events, moments in our lives that stick with us and put a smile on our faces and yes, tears in our eyes - sometimes at the same time.

All are welcomed to share their thoughts of Norman with us.

My main memories of Norm are that he took me places I'd never been before. Biking to Fort Dix or New Egypt or Turkey Swamp for the first time, seeing parts of NJ that I had no idea existed - particularly on a hybrid bike, trailing the rest of the riders. But the ride that I remember most, and clearly had the most enduring effect, was one Norm led from Bulls Island up into some of the hills of Hunterdon County. He led this ride once a year and stopped several years ago when he gave up on doing hills. But on this particular ride it was Norm, another gentleman about Norm's age, and me. I was on my hybrid and, once again, trailed after these two guys who were both 20 years my senior. But what a ride. It was one of the first times I'd come to this pretty part of NJ and it has stuck with me to this day. I moved out here so I can ride these hills regularly. Thanks, Norm.

Let's keep having moments and hope that cycling and other PFW activities turn into good memories for each of you.

Much thanks to those of you who, like Norm, volunteer to lead rides and get involved in PFW activities.

**Happy Holidays, Michael Heffler**

**Note from your Editor:** Time is too short before we go to press this month [Ed Note: January 2009] for properly reporting thoughts and memories you each may wish to share about Norman – as some already have done. In order to do it properly, I will reserve space in next month's issue so that each and every one wishing to contribute something can do so.

As for this issue, I can think of no better way to remember Norman and his contributions than to reprint the article we ran at this time last year. For all who knew him well, this can serve as a reminder, for those who only just met him or who had not yet done that – it can serve as a proper introduction to a man we will all miss greatly.

John Powers

## ***PFW Salutes Stormin' Norman***

**Norman joined the PFW in August of 1991.** By the following February, he was already being thanked in The FreeWheel for bailing out the Ride Captain. He did so by listing the following weekday ride: **Stormin' With Norman** – and so began a PFW Classic.

By that June, he had already become a fixture when he took over the reigns on Monday Night Madness, a club staple ride. Norman doesn't do that ride anymore, instead choosing to ride in the AM on Monday. He can do that because he retired from a long and distinguished career in State Government. However, he will tell you he gave that ride up only reluctantly. No, it wasn't Dottie, it was because he began chairing The Event – which he has done 5 times - and because of the consequential mandated attendance at Monthly Board meetings, which he has done faithfully in the succeeding 6 years since then.

For the record, Norman is credited with 1794 rides – not counting 2007 [or 2008] – averaging 120 /year & in 15 years has led the most rides . . . 15 times! He has also chaired The Event no less than 5 times (2001 – 2005); been a Board member continuously since 2001, serving as Member-at-Large, Program Chair [VP1], and, since 2006, as our President – an office he is currently threatening to vacate. ***Thanks again to Norman!!***



Norman receiving a plaque presented by long time member Pat Van Hise recognizing him for his long time service to the club as published on the cover of Volume XXIX #1, January 2008.

*Club  
Topics*

**THE PFW REMEMBERS  
STORMIN' NORMAN**  
*Text Excerpted From  
VOL XXX - Issue 2*

## ***PFW Remembers Stormin' Norman***

**Dear PFW members,** You have been absolutely wonderful in rallying around Norman and me during a very sad and difficult time.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you for everything - your many visits, your phone calls, cards, notes, and emails, your offerings of food and assistance, and for being there for us during our time of need. The flowers sent last fall were beautiful. The November 1st bike ride in Norman's honor was spectacular and very moving. Your offer to provide the refreshments following the funeral was so very generous and much appreciated. Norman was devoted to the PFW, and he valued his many friendships there. It is easy to see why. You are fantastic people (not only in your cycling abilities), and I will never forget your many kindnesses to us. ***Dottie Batho***

**Thoughts of Norman Batho, our long time member, adviser, past president, board member, friend and avid cyclist.**

### **The Ride For Norman**

Saturday, November 1 9:00 AM B 25 mi, C 25 mi, C-/D- 12 mi

#### **NORMAN BATHO TRIBUTE RIDE:**

Please join us on November 1st, rain or shine to show our support of Norman. Meet at Village Park in Cranbury for a ride past Norman's house. A cheerful show of support for our friend and mentor. We will ride en masse past his house and wave, and depending on the pace, rides will continue on or return to Cranbury. Everyone is welcome and people looking for a longer ride can re group in Cranbury to do more on their own, or continue on from Norm's house in Twin Rivers with the B or C ride leaders.

**Leaders:** Don Sprague, B; John Smolenyak, C; Genevieve Belfiglio, C-/D+.



### **To those who could not attend the ride to Norman's:**

I arrived at the park at 5 minutes to nine. I had never seen so many cars. Both lots were almost full. When the ride got underway someone mentioned that there were almost 100 riders. I have never been on so large a ride. Some additional people showed up at his house. When we arrived, Norman was already sitting outside on a chair. Dottie and three of his five children were there. There was a daughter and son from Georgia and a daughter from Maryland. They had helped Norman get to the chair. The bikers formed a line and each gave Norman their regards. The men shook his hand and the women gave him hugs and kisses. It was not too long before tears were streaming down his cheeks. It was very touching. His wife and children were overwhelmed at the number of people who showed up.

***Don Sprague***

**We needed a police escort thru Cranbury.** It took 25+ minutes for everyone to say hello to Norman. He got the general idea that quite a few PFW people were thinking of him. I even road with one guy who didn't know Norman but still showed up. I wish I had a helicopter to get better view of everyone at the

beginning. Lots of people showed up-30+ at least. I had 17 people sign my C pace sheet.

***John Smolenyak***

**Genevieve, You were a genius** to come up with the idea for the Ride for Norman. It was a wonderful thing to do, and Norman definitely appreciated it. He loved seeing his many old biking buddies again. The fact that it happened when 3 of Norman's children were visiting from Georgia and Maryland made it even more special. I looked for you in the crowd, but it's hard to identify people when they are wearing helmets and dark glasses. However, I think I spotted you in one of my photos later. Thank you so much!

***Dottie***

**It turns out that what we remember** are events, moments in our lives that stick with us and put a smile on our faces and yes, tears in our eyes - sometimes at the same time. My main memories of Norm are that he took me places I'd never been before. Biking to Fort Dix or New Egypt or Turkey Swamp for the first time, seeing parts of NJ that I had no idea existed - particularly on a hybrid bike, trailing the rest of the riders. But the ride that I remember most, and clearly had the most enduring effect, was one Norm led from Bulls Island up into some of the hills of Hunterdon Co. He led this ride once a year & stopped several years ago when he gave up on doing hills. But on this particular ride it was Norm, another gentleman about Norm's age, & me. I was on my hybrid &, once again, trailed after these two guys - both 20 years my senior. But what a ride. It was one of the first times I'd come to this pretty part of NJ and it has stuck with me to this day. I moved out here so I can ride these hills regularly. Thanks, Norm.

***Michael Heffler***

**Words can not express the passion & humility** that Norman brought to the PFW. His leadership brought many of us starting out in cycling for the first time to new experiences and sights along the way. I think our spirits came closer together in the 1990s on a cold winter ride in the hills of Hunterdon County from Bull Island State Park south of Frenchtown, where we were the only two riders. Spending the three hours with Norman on the road alone showed me the strong qualities this special person had for many of us. I know that Norman's spirit lives on in many of our hearts and his name will be endeared on all future PFW rides.

***Ken Leon***

**I am very saddened** by Norm's passing. Unfortunately, I will be out of town this weekend.

***Richard D. Smith***

**I will not be able to attend** [the funeral] as I have family from out of the area visiting. That does not keep me from feeling quite unhappy about Norman's passing. A wonderful life!! Still very sad!!! Take care.

***Kolman Kleinbord***

**Please give my heartfelt sympathy** to Norman's wife and family. My wife and I have ridden with Norman a few times and will always remember him as a fine gentleman with a great heart and soul for bicycle riding. We were deeply impressed with his spirit and strength during his rides. He will be sadly missed, but my wife and I are better for having rode with Norman Batho.

***Sincerely, Brian Duerr & Jennifer Bischoff-Duerr***

**My Thoughts about Norman.** Starting back in 1993 when I first bought a bike and showed up for one of Norman's C+ rides that turned into a B ride I was impressed by Norman's humor, patience and encouragement as I would try to hold, for me, what was breathless conversation. His rides were something you could count on. Always there, always with a smile and a twinkle in his eye (indeed at this time of year one could say a Kris Kringle twinkle) and always considerate.

I don't think I'd have stuck with riding had it not been for Norman. Thank you Norman for opening up a wonderful world for me.

***Harold Berkowitz***

**Norman was my welcome** mat to the club! I began to ride in the summer of '05, sometimes 3 times a week from Cranbury with him. I loved the rides and I adored him, too. He had a wonderful soft manner and lazy summer day attitude, even thou we were biking hard in the heat. Coincidentally, Norman and I had the same Bianci bicycle, sooo I felt that I could ride 3000 miles a year too, just like him! He asked me to lead a ride, I was honored and I took the responsibility v. seriously. I got lost when I was scouting the trip and sent him a panic email, he just sent me another route and that was fine. Norman never made a fuss of much and I was happy to help out -- the great ride leader! Once I remarked to him, that I couldn't imagine where he found all these back roads. Norm assured me "I have roads that you've never seen!"



Well Norm, I will miss you dearly. I'll find those routes in your honor, and I hope to introduce other newbies to the joy of biking - much like you welcomed me & changed my life.

***Nancy Sheehan***

**I'm sorry to hear about Norm.** I asked that Ken Sharples post something on line about Norm and his funeral. Thanks.

***Elaine Berk***

**I rode with Norman on his Sunday morning rides.** He was one of those special people you meet in life that stand out from the crowd. When thinking about memories to share, one of the first things that comes to my mind is that map that he kept in his head. Norman not only knew of every road within a radius 40 or more miles out of Hightstown but he knew all the distances too. And Norman kept you on your toes. While he took his time getting to the rest stop, after he finished his Dr. Pepper, he would hit the road in a flash, with or without you! So Norman, when we all meet you up there, please wait for us...we don't know the roads there yet! We'll miss you.

***Cliff Hochberg***

**I can recall back in the summer of 2001,** when he was a mere youth of 69, I was on an evening B+ ride, and over my head at the time. About 15-20 miles away from home, he said to me "Son do you know your way home, you're about to get dropped?". In fact at the 2007 PFW Holiday Party, when he was recognized for his contributions to the club (I believe for leading more rides than anyone else in 2007), I went up to Norm and told him what he said to me, back in 2001. Norm said, "that sounds like something I would have said".

Despite the fact that Norm battled issues with his heart, and eventually the cancer, for several years, he continued to make very meaningful contributions to the Princeton Freewheelers, and the sport of cycling in general. He was a one of a kind person that will be terribly missed.

***Howard Fenichel***

**Norm's passage has left a big gap for me.** I spent many great hours and many great miles on the road with him as I learned lots of great routes. It was always a warm, comforting, reassuring feeling to know that Norm was leading his regular rides and that everyone was welcome. We could always count on his gruffly friendly face and being welcome to join him on a pleasant ride through the roads that he loved so well. Goodbye Norm.

***Terry Stouch***

**You'll be getting alot of email responses from alot of people,** there won't be enough paper to print out all our memories, but here's one that sticks out in my mind, in case you have room. I remember when I joined the freewheelers, I had no idea about roadbikes and the such. I remember my first club ride I made the mistake of not tying my hair in a pony tail and Norman quipped something to the effect that I looked like a rollerblader, after that I made sure to put my hair in a ponytail. :) He was always making quips about everything, at times it was hard not to fall off the bike from laughing so hard. I always told him I would have loved to print a book of his quips, he had such a way with words, he will be missed.

***Hilda Danek***

**Norman did sooooo much for the club,** and it's hard enough for me to acknowledge a fellow April Fool is gone.

***Ed Post***

**Did you know Norman paid for a family membership** because it just gave more to the club?

***Carrie Becker***

**I've always appreciated and will miss that knowing look,** that reserved spirit and that kind soul!

***Eddie Hayduk***

**Rest in peace Norman.**

***Guy LiMato***

**I didn't have that much opportunity** to ride with Norman, maybe 20 times, & there wasn't anything humorous or surprising that happened, but they were very pleasant rides - always run on suitable roads. I guess the surprising thing was Norman's & his bike's appearance. He wore a jersey & shorts like you'd think, but he never wore bicycling shoes & never had toe clips - let alone clipless pedals. But that didn't stop him from pedaling seemingly much faster than the pace advertised & I only came to C bike rides & I missed a lot of them as they started at 1& I like to ride 1<sup>st</sup> thing in the morning. So it seems most of the time that we did talk, it was before the start of the rides because he was napping in between his C+ ride in the morning & pm C ride.

He always made a rest stop - good for me because I couldn't keep up with him, but there wasn't much chance to talk to him because we didn't rest for long. In fact, on one of his many rides to Pierre's Deli and Bakery, I came out of the bakery with two pieces of pastry & I hadn't finished the first before he was pushing me to hurry up because everyone was ready to leave.

A couple of years ago, he took us on the sidewalks or paths in between Petty & Scotts Corner Roads due to a bridge being out. He had a superior knowledge of finding his way around; I never knew those paths existed & I've never been on them since. I could never find my way back there if I tried.

Oh, did I mention that Norman was a much faster rider than I was? A couple cases in point: I always stop for red lights no matter how long they are, & on one of the last rides I went with Norman from Etra Lake Park he announced we were going to the Clarksburg General Store. I missed a light but knew they were turning toward Allentown. I didn't know where they were turning off of Old York Rd so I took the first left because I knew Norman to stay on back roads. I got to the Store & they hadn't arrived yet. The rest of the group arrived back at the cars 5 min after me - saying they waited in Allentown.

The other incident I recall was on a ride from Cranbury to Englishtown. He never said where we were turning off Federal Rd so I just assumed it to be a right hand turn a mile before Englishtown because in that other bike club, we always turned there to get to CR 527 south of Englishtown. So they passed me about three miles later & were asking what happened. I told them you never said we were stopping in Englishtown so I just took off.

There wasn't anything flashy or unusual about him compared to other riders I knew, except he was always getting out to lead bike rides & every early summer we would talk about the High Wheelers & about their rallies. I never knew of his hand in organizing them - let alone in charge of two. One he mentioned was being held in Vermont & I thought how could these bikes possibly be ridden in that terrain. But leave it to Norman to attempt to do that & to attempt & succeed in doing so much for the club.

***Dan Rappaport***

**Today, on returning from my ride** with Al and Walt to New Egypt, and having separated from them because we each went in different directions, a familiar car ran up along side me and there was the smiling face of Norman. Dottie was at the helm and we exchanged niceties. That guy will never quit...He looked super.

Norman was the quintessential quiet man. His patience was endless. We oldsters would bring up all of the taboo subjects

including religion, politics, medical procedures and medications, to mention but a few. How he survived our passionate outbursts is beyond my ken. Additionally, during the last few months, when a few of us wanted to spread our wings and fly, as he eventually approached us, at a predetermined corner, he would say, "Hello, are you folks with the Freewheelers" or "Hey, I thought this was an Almost C ride" and we would silently acknowledge his gracefulness.

He was a fabulous leader and we all came to marvel at his knowledge of our New Jersey roads...in effect, if the boss upstairs ever needs a cue sheet, He merely has to turn to Norman. Let's hope he rides the Heavenly roads forever. He was one class act! There is little I can add, but that we have all lost an incredible human being.

***Giorgio [Foradori]***

**This past Saturday**, I also visited with him and Dottie. She was stocking Norm's bird feeder in the front yard. I also got to peek in his special room, filled with bicycle memorabilia. Everything in there is in some way related to cycling. I have never seen so much stuff.

***Dennis Whitney***

**I was there when Norman last rode.** Since I had returned to riding in July of last year, Norman's rides looked like a great way to work in riding as recovery exercise from heart ailments of my own. I was thankful to have Norman there to stick with me as the rest of the crew was well into their July level of fitness - that's PFW code for "you are welcome on our rides but you gotta realize we're gonna exceed the advertised pace." Thankfully, I found that the crew was still pretty good about waiting for those who couldn't keep up. On these rides, that was mostly Norman and I. But for some reason, we both kept going back.

Perhaps it was to see who would be strongest each week on some ridiculously low and poor imitation of a real "hill," perhaps just to enjoy the company of the others - at least for a time at the rest stops! Norman knew the best ones and, as a result, so did all those who rode with him. I not only did this last ride - I think I did his last ride in the hills. As with others recalling rides with Norman [Michael wasn't the only one to mention a Bull Island ride with him], it was just the two of us. That day found us traveling north through Hopewell. He really did not enjoy the climb up Amwell Rd from CR 518. Faced with such a choice, most would perhaps go up Provinceline as it's less steep, but not

Norman. Lindbergh, which followed immediately, was less steep than either of those, but it did not excite him either. I seem to recall him grudgingly swearing it would be the last time he did such a ride. He did not cut it short, however, tho I told him it would matter little to me if he did. I guess we didn't listen to each other all that well.

More than one of us has mentioned times when Norman would take us on one of his beloved longer rides, more commonly, if not more fondly, recalled as "death marches." I can recall a day when we joined up at Brookdale Community College for what for many of us was an annual "Rite of Spring" - The Farmlands Flat Century. I had resolved to stay with Norman early on, and although he more than once suggested I should go on ahead [as the pace was often slower than he expected I'd prefer] and, after all, he had assured me not to worry, that he'd be fine. I was dedicated, however, to keeping his company as a speedy century was not my concern - at least not on that day. We spent much of the day hanging on to relatively fast groups, capturing draft at the back. I knew he was capable as his ability to hang on to the back of his regular Monday 'Stormin' With Norman' [B rides] was legendary - even when the pace returning to the park exceeded 25 mph. However, his hard work staying on my wheel eventually was too much. The group turned a corner some distance ahead, I remarked that they had neglected to wait for us. Norman simply said, "Good, can we slow down now?" 85 mi of chasing faster riders before Norman risked disappointing me with such a direct remark.

***John Powers***

**I'd like to thank Mike Heffler and all the Freewheelers for the beautiful flowers, the ride honoring me, all the food, calls, cards, and well-wishes that have come our way.**

***I'll miss you, Norman & Dottie***

**Norman was a guy who liked to ride a bike.** Pretty much everyone has a Norman story. The one I like to tell is my first club ride. Strong and fit, I rode up that first day on my son's fifty pound hybrid and there was a motley crew of grey haired, pot bellied guys that had a good 25 years on me. How hard could this be? I thought. They kicked my butt. Norman's 45 mile ride was a 29 mile ride that day. And Norman pulled me for the last 5. There were grunts and complaints about not even breaking 30 miles on a beautiful, sunny day, but Norman in his typical

fashion, just let it roll off his back. Well those motley guys are now my dear friends. And there have been a lot of others that have come and gone on Norman's ride. People who were suffering losses, of jobs, of spouses, and of all the other things in our lives that can leave us sometimes feeling shaken, unsure. But in the midst of an uncertain world, there was always the certainty of Norman's ride. An anchor in times of doubt, something to look forward to on days that for many people would have been empty, lonely, lost. He brought us all together. And helped us get stronger so we could move on to other rides, where we made other friends. And the circle of friendship was like a stone skipping across a pond, the water feathering out in concentric circles.... but always tethered to the rock. Norman.

Norman was a guy who liked to ride a bike. But in his own quiet way, with strength & reserve, he brought hundreds of people together, showing us what it means to be cheerful, kind, generous, connected. This is his real legacy.

**Genevieve Belfiglio**

*Club  
Topics*

**THE PFW REMEMBERS  
STORMIN' NORMAN**

*Contributions of His Artwork  
Excerpted From VARIOUS PAST  
ISSUES AND CLUB MATERIALS PLUS  
MEMBER DONATED PHOTOS*

Princeton Free Wheelers'  
28th Annual Bicycling Event  
August 2, 2008  
Mercer County Community College



[www.princetonfreewheelers.com](http://www.princetonfreewheelers.com)  
[infoguy@princetonfreewheelers.com](mailto:infoguy@princetonfreewheelers.com)  
609-882-4739

# August 4, 2007



## Princeton Free Wheelers Ride Roster

PO Box 1204 Princeton, NJ 08542-1204

Leader: Norman Batho Date: 8/3/07 Ride Class: C  
 Ride Name: Back by Noon Mileage: 30

**RELEASE AND AGREEMENT:** In consideration of my participation in this Princeton Free Wheelers, Inc. (PFW) sponsored ride, I, the undersigned, intending to be legally bound, do hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, waive, release and forever discharge any and all claims I may now or in the future have against the PFW, its officers, members, and sponsors, and any other persons connected with this ride for any liability for personal injury, illness, death, or property damage sustained by me resulting from my participation in this ride sponsored by the PFW, except to the extent that it is caused by gross negligence. In the event that such injury, illness, death or damage is caused by gross negligence, this release remains operative as to any released person or entity which was not grossly negligent.

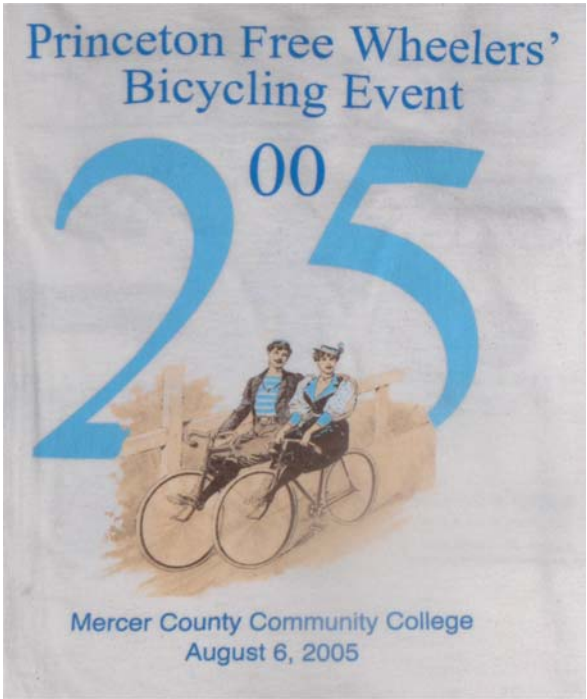
1. I am in good health and expect to ride at the pace of any ride in which I participate, and I am sufficiently prepared and experienced to undertake this ride.
2. My bicycle equipment is in good working order, and has the proper safety equipment.
3. I will wear an ASTM, ANSI or Snell approved helmet while riding.
4. I will obey the motor vehicle and bicycle laws of the state(s) in which the ride occurs, and I will obey the following PFW ride practices during this ride:
  - Be alert.
  - Know my limits.
  - Will not ride too close.
  - Signal my intentions.
  - Call out hazards.
5. If I ride ahead, I'm on my own. I will notify the ride leader should I decide to leave the ride.
6. If injured or disabled on any ride, or if I cause any injury, loss or damage, I will promptly alert the ride leader.
7. I recognize the hazards inherent in the activity of Bicycling and I nevertheless undertake this voluntarily.
8. I understand that this Release is in addition to the agreement which I signed to join or renew my membership in the PFW, and that this agreement does not in any way limit or impair the waivers or releases contained in that agreement.
9. I will follow the directions of the ride leader.
10. Riders under 18 years of age need to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Norman Batho

Norman Batho

609-448-9547

X



**06  
Event**





PRINCETON FREEWHEELERS

2001

ANNUAL

**BICYCLING  
EVENT**



08 Jersey Design



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