

# CYCLE OF Life

BY NICOLE TAFE

THE PREMIER  
BICYCLE CLUB  
OFFERS VAST  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR HEALTHY  
LIVING, EATING AND  
CAMARADERIE.



*One of PBC's groups at last July's  
Shenandoah & Skyline Drive Tour.*

Just over two years ago, nine cycling friends banded together and realized the need for a cycling club that focuses on living a healthier lifestyle through cycling and healthy eating, with a focus on eating a whole-food, plant-based diet. Now approaching 350 members strong, the group's footprint in the Pittsburgh region continues to make its mark.

The Premier Bicycle Club (PBC) was founded in November 2016 in Gibsonsia. The organization began with a diverse group of community-based individuals including lawyers, doctors, salespeople, students, business owners, health care professionals, retirees and more. Today, PBC's Executive Council includes founding members Robert Vano (President), Tom Rudy (Treasurer), Ray Brodersen (Director), Mark Jopling (Director) and Corinne Vano (Director). The rest of the Executive Council includes Jodi Bailey (Vice President & Sponsor Coordinator), Bridget Ferris (Secretary & Director) and Antonio-Javier Lopez (Director).

"With more than 70 years of cycling experience combined, we understand what the cycling community wants and needs," says Robert Vano. "We are people with different backgrounds but a shared interest in coming together to provide a positive and supportive environment that encourages a healthy lifestyle for recreational cyclists of all levels, to improve their skills and to participate with others in the joys of cycling. We have a strong conviction that cycling is more enjoyable when each of us takes a comprehensive approach to a healthier lifestyle."

PBC is the only club in Western PA that is consistently creating opportunities for cyclists of all levels to participate in group rides and various cycling events.

The club recommends a whole-food, plant-based diet because it is backed by significant research. Research is proving that eating more whole foods and plants reduces the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Grocery store shelves are offering more plant-based food options—a sign that the research is proving that it is becoming a necessary way of life. "The Premier Bicycle Club embraces facts that support the latest research and realizes it is not an easy street to travel when transitioning from a standard American-fare diet," adds Vano. "We've learned that more success is achieved when we all work together."

PBC hosts five major club events throughout the year including the Spring Kick-Off Ride and Party in April and the Celebration Ride in May. The Shenandoah & Skyline Drive Tour, held in Harrisonburg, Virginia, is the group's largest event, with comfortable accommodations, shopping, healthy eating, fantastic riding opportunities in the scenic Shenandoah Valley, socialization opportunities and more—all in a more intimate setting. "Our members get to know each other even better at this event because it creates a perfect experience for people to do something unique together," says Vano. "Whether it is a casual ride through the valley or a challenging ride to the top of a mountain, our members do it together and encourage and support each other. New friends are made. This event alone attracts new members



Robert Vano



Members of PBC—representing males and females of all ages—show off their club jerseys during a trip to Italy last June.

from as far away as parts of West Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; and Harrisburg, Pa."

New this year, PBC's Wine Tour Rendezvous event will be held in Erie and involves three days of riding opportunities in Erie Wine Country while visiting several wineries each day. The club will wrap up the year with its Fall Foliage Ride and Annual Membership Meeting, Auction and Party. "We created these large events to bring people together to laugh, socialize and learn from each other," explains Vano.

In addition to big events, PBC offers regular weekly rides in all regions of Pittsburgh led by trained ride leaders, and encourages members in each region to organize and lead other rides in their communities. One of the largest groups gathers on Saturday mornings at the Northern Tier Regional Library on Dickey Road in Gibsonsia—attracting anywhere from seven to 45 riders and multiple ride leaders guiding riders of different levels on mostly quiet country roads. Other regular group rides include the North Pittsburgh Country Ride, North Classic Ride, North Park to Sewickley Ride, Il Gruppo Ride, Sewickley Hills Ride, Waterfront Ride and more.

"Becoming a part of PBC is simple!" says Vano. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the annual membership donation is only \$25 for an individual and \$40 for a family. All donations support the club to pay operating expenses and are used to serve its mission in the Pittsburgh region by offering cycling events and regular rides that help members live the lifestyle they desire.

"We look forward to more people in the Pittsburgh region becoming members of the largest cycling club in the Western PA region while living a healthier lifestyle through cycling and healthy eating. Having a support group like PBC is an important component to each individual's success," says Vano. "I relate our success to having a fantastic group of people who see what we are doing is good for the community as a whole. We provide opportunities to those who are interested in being a part, while not breaking their bank account." ■



## UPCOMING EVENTS

With Premier Bicycle Club

May 18—Celebration Ride

July 24-28—Shenandoah & Skyline Drive Tour

September 20-22—Wine Tour Rendezvous

» For more information about the club, upcoming rides and events, visit [PremierBicycleClub.org](http://PremierBicycleClub.org).