

Rollin'

Newsletter of the Silver Wheels Cycling Club, Inc.

March, 2015

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Editor's Column



By Larry Best

So there I was, minding my own business as usual when, all of a sudden some new ideas popped into my head. When this happens it's usually all right, but sometimes not. In addition to my other duties I'm also serving on the safety committee. We've talked about safe riding practices, bike lanes, how to deal with traffic, what we should do at traffic lights and stop signs, and the safest way to turn into a place to get a donut or two. We decided that clothing should usually be bright, but we haven't talked about is attitude. I did a

little research on the internet and my findings are posted in this issue.

Here are a couple of reminders of upcoming rides. : **The Chili Weiner Ride** is on Sunday, March 8 at 9:30 leaves from the Oberlin Depot. Those who are brave enough will have an option to ride 2-3 mile route or 10 mile route! No leaders have volunteered yet- so we will have maps ready for those who ride. Non-riders can come at 10:00 am to meet and greet and eat! Bring cards or games to play. Lunch time around 10:30 when all riders are back we eat! We will have 4 pots of chili, hot dogs, coffee and water. Need side dishes- anything goes!

Questions or comments

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The Pi(e) Ride will be on Saturday, March 14. It will leave from the party center at Twin Lake Homes at 42260 Albrecht Rd. in Elyria at noon. Pie shaped (sort of) rides of 3, 11, 15, and 18 miles will be available for those riding. You are **EXPECTED** to bring a pie. There will be prizes given for the most unusual pie. The prizes will be aprons that you can use for aprons, dust rags, or maybe for cleaning your bike. Questions? Contact: Ed Stewart emsc0514@gmail.com 440-365-6784

Membership Report

By Randy Lottman

New Members:

(Newbies)



Frances Carly Westlake

Rob & Robin Falke Avon Lake

Susan Gipper Rocky River

Steve Hill Vermilion

Glenn & Karen Hobbs Oberlin

Ron & Pam Roberts Avon

Gary, Debra & Emily Teaman Avon

Shawn Turk Westlake

Steve Hill

Non-Renewing Members

Louis Calabrese

Rich, Janine, & Dillon Exner

Bob & Jane French

Andy & Ann Higgins

Eugene & Kelly Homan

William & Jeanette Muhlback

Kerry Volansky

Sunshine Committee

Jenni Weber – death of a family member - card

Steve Mette – death of a family member - card

Sharon Bouchonville – death of a family member - card

Ron Townsend - surgery

Robert Esper – surgery

Dave Weber – hospital stay

Cycling is Not Good

By Larry Best

Fear is big business. It's profitable. A company is manufacturing "Thud Guard"-helmets for toddlers to wear around the house of all things. Their slogan is "Learning to walk in a world of hard surfaces." I think this sort of thinking is a slippery slope to go down. Is this where we want to be headed after 50,000 years of relative home safety? Denmark is the safest country in the world in which to ride a bicycle. About 25,000 people in Denmark cycle to work every work day. Almost all of them ride upright bikes with flat handlebars. Why? Because they're easier to handle in urban traffic. Looking over your shoulder to check traffic? No problem. Upright bikes are more comfortable for short distances of 3-4 mile trips. Fenders are a must when commuting. If you stood on a corner during rush hour anywhere in Denmark you would see flocks of cyclists riding by. You'd have to wait for a very long time to see anybody wearing a helmet. Remember that Denmark is the safest country in the world in which to ride. Almost no helmets worn there. Those who do wear helmets are subject to pointing and laughter.

Surprisingly helmets don't have a sterling track record for safety.

Scientists are 50/50 pro & con regarding their usefulness in preventing serious injuries. If helmets were a medicine it would be nowhere near being approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) because there's simply not enough evidence that they work. There are a few studies out there that show that injuries are worse or no different whether or not you have a helmet on. There's also a study that shows you're 14% more likely to have an accident if you're wearing a helmet. Another study shows that cars and trucks pass cyclists more closely if cyclists are wearing a helmet. The cyclists given to most room are those that look like Mary Poppins.

Helmets are tested for impact on the crown of the head. They're not even tested for impact on the side, front or back. They are lab tested to the equivalent of a pedestrian falling & hitting his head on the sidewalk. In fact, pedestrians have a greater number of head injuries than cyclists so shouldn't pedestrians be wearing helmets? The culture of fear isn't concerned with facts. Facts get in the way of making money. Helmets for cars is a rational idea because they might prevent injury and death on a large scale, but outside of racing, have you ever seen a motorist wearing a helmet? People would laugh at that, which also helps to confirm the fact that the culture of fear doesn't consider facts. Car dealers never tell you that 35 to 45,000 people die in cars every year. They don't tell you the

chances of the car rolling over or catching fire in an accident. Instead of pointing out the dangers they excel in pointing out the attractiveness, the status, the power, the smoothness, the luxury, the quietness, the gas mileage, the practicality, etc.

These are the very opposite things that we're telling people about cycling. Instead of trying to encourage cycling the public is told that it's difficult, expensive, dangerous, sweaty and sub cultural. None of these words have ever been used to successfully market anything, even weapons. If you look at some of the old bicycle posters from the early 20th century, the people riding them portrayed, happy, free, fun loving, and frequently include pictures of beautiful women, which perhaps help women to feel more freedom as well in those years. At any rate they certainly attracted people to cycling. In the early days of cycling the bicycle was portrayed as glamorous, affordable, ennobling, effortless, fast, practical and mainstream.

Just as an example let's compare the marketing of wine to the current marketing of cycling. Words about wine include "A bold playmate for your palate." "Well designed to imbibe with red meat and excellent with cheese." "Made from handpicked grapes." "Stay thirsty my friends." All positive words. You never hear or see words like, If you drink too much of our product you'll become dizzy. Have more and you'll throw up on your shoes, embarrass

yourself in public, spend a day with a terrible hangover, become an alcoholic & lose your job, your family and die penniless with liver disease.

With cycling we don't hear many positive words. Fun, good exercise...OK, now I'm drawing a blank about other positive words. Instead I'm thinking about words like dangerous, you better wear a helmet, don't ride on roads where there a lot of cars, stick to the bike path, I can't commute because I'll get all sweaty, cycling is hard work, I could never ride 5 miles to work, what happens if it rains? All negative stuff. No wonder cycling isn't more popular here. It scares the hell out of you if you're even thinking about riding. Sure, there has been a surge in bicycle sales among sport cyclists like those who are likely to be reading this, but everyday recreational and commuter riders...not so much.

Cycling in urban areas gives a feeling of freedom and joy & directly interacting with the environment and your fellow citizens. We're not separated like we are in cars. We're elbow to elbow, which doesn't mean we're talking to each other, but there's no barrier between us like steel & glass. What are the chances of road rage between 2 cyclists? It may happen, but I think it's probably at a much, much lower incidence than with motor vehicles.

Urban cycling is very profitable for cities. For every mile cycled the city makes \$1.10 in profit. How do you figure that? That figures comes from \$.53 cents

from living 7 years longer, \$.22 from being less ill while alive, \$.35 cents from saved health costs. Politicians need to realize that cycling is incredibly cost efficient. By contrast cities pay out an average of \$.16 for every mile of motor vehicle travel. Road repair, more traffic control devices, speed cameras, parking meters, pot hole and paving costs, etc.

So let's start marketing cycling as freeing, efficient, fun, easy, and practical instead of dangerous, sub cultural, impractical, sweaty, and dangerous. Wait! Did I say dangerous? I guess I did. Many cyclists who read this are going to say, "Yeah, it's dangerous." That's why you need to dress like the picture below. This just feeds the negative marketing and negative attitude towards cycling that we already have. Lighten up and think of some positive things to say about cycling. It's easy to do.

How many times have you heard we never wore helmets, had to wear seatbelts and have all those warning labels, etc. etc. and we turned out just fine? Right? Yes, we did.



LAST PAGE

One of the most important things about cycling is getting a bike that fits you correctly.

Here's Ed Rowe demonstrating a proper fit on his new bike

