



AMERICAN BICYCLIST

DELIVERING ON OUR MISSION

Creating a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone p. 2

CAST YOUR VOTE FOR THE BOARD

Help determine who will serve for the next three years p. 4

STORIES THAT INSPIRED US

Celebrating the positive impacts of bicycling in 2014 p. 6

November - December 2014

WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG





MARCH 10-12, 2015
WASHINGTON D.C.

BIKES+



When more people ride, life is better for everyone.

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THINK BIKE

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Celebrating the positive impacts of bicycling in the lives of many different people from many different backgrounds.

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AMERICAN BICYCLIST MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED AS A BENEFIT TO MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS. IF YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER, AND YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE AND SUPPORT THE INNOVATIVE ADVOCACY DESCRIBED WITHIN, JOIN THE LEAGUE AT BIKELEAGUE.ORG/JOIN.

ON THE COVER: JIM SILCOTT, AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN COLUMBUS, OHIO, WAS AN INSPIRATION TO HIS STUDENTS IN THE NATIONAL BIKE CHALLENGE



DELIVERING ON OUR MISSION

This year marked my 10-year anniversary as CEO of the League. We have twice the budget and staff we did back in 2004 and 2005, which is a nice metric — but one that doesn't begin to describe the impact and value of our work over that time.

In the past decade, we've tripled the number of League Cycling Instructors and dramatically improved the materials they use to deliver critical skills training in communities across the country. The outcome of two federal transportation bills has been directly affected by the annual National Bike Summit lobby day and our year-round national advocacy

our membership numbers have remained steady, we have more than doubled the number of club and advocacy groups that are affiliated with the League and have added tens of thousands of engaged supporters through our social media and action alert networks.

Behind every one of these numbers, though, are amazing — and inspirational — personal stories and anecdotes. Last month, I was thanking Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker for his leadership on quality of life initiatives, including biking, and he graciously replied: "We're just following your roadmap. You tell us

program and Equity Initiative are shining a light on some of the most creative, innovative and powerful people and ideas in our ever-expanding movement — people who will in turn provide the roadmap for the next great transformation of our movement.

Long-time members will recall that I was actually on staff at the League 25 years ago when we still hosted rallies, had a hospitality homes network and sold an extraordinary number of patches every year. There were only a couple of other national bike groups back then, and almost no state or local groups with paid staff. Our movement has changed and grown a lot over the past quarter century — as has the role of the League within that movement.

I'm excited and proud to say that I believe we're delivering on our mission — leading the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone — more powerfully than at any point in the last 25 years. I can't wait to carry on that work and begin that transformation of our organization and movement into a valuable, relevant and inclusive force for good — not just in the world of bicycling, but for society at large.

Thank you so much for your support of the League and our work over the years. It means the world to us. ■



Andy Clarke, League President

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work — resulting in billions of dollars of investment in bike infrastructure and programs and the creation of initiatives such as Safe Routes to School and the proliferation of Complete Streets policies. Our blueprint for a Bicycle Friendly America has resulted in more than 300 community designations, 811 business awards and recognition of 100 universities at Bronze or higher levels. And, while

what we should be doing next." That's a powerful endorsement of the work we do.

Many of the remarkable stories in this issue of *American Bicyclist* arise from programs we've added more recently. We are so proud to have launched the National Bike Challenge, which has inspired so many stories of life-changing behavior among the 47,000 participants this year. Our pioneering Women Bike



TRIBUTE TO DAD

The League was honored this fall to receive a \$250 donation from the children and grandchildren of Colorado resident Jerry White. As Rebecca White explained, the gift was made “to honor [White] as he biked to work when he was in town, renting a bike to cycle to conferences when he was traveling, vowing to not use the car on weekends (of course you can bike to the symphony!) and working to keep the travel ways safe for all of those on two wheels.” ■

INBOX

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Diana and I had a great time participating in the National Bike Challenge. Neither of us had ever tracked our miles before, and we've been astounded to realize how inspiring it is just to know how much we're riding. We definitely find ourselves striving for new milestones — a higher daily total, more miles in a week, the most miles we've ever done in a month — and we've both reached new levels of stamina and strength this summer. We've had a blast, and we'll look forward to doing the Challenge next year. - *Syd Davenport-Fey, St. Paul, MN*

PUSHING EMPLOYEES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

When I cruise the leaderboards for the National Bike Challenge, I'm encouraged to see how high our participation rate is compared to other workplaces. And I can say that we would not have achieved our Silver Bicycle Friendly Business award and such a popular summer of cycling bike program if we hadn't jumped on board with the inaugural Challenge back in 2012. I'm really proud of my co-workers. It's very rewarding to be the “bike champion” here. Thanks for offering this program. - *Sue Hewitt, M.S., Health District of Northern Larimer County*

GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK Email your comments to carolyn@bikeleague.org; send a letter to 1612 K St NW, Ste 308, Washington, DC 20006; or chime in on Facebook ([facebook.com/leagueamericanbicyclists](https://www.facebook.com/leagueamericanbicyclists)) or Twitter (@bikeleague).

GIVING

Thank you to the following organizations and individuals who contributed to the League, above and beyond membership dues, in July and August 2014.

ORGANIZATIONS

\$5,000+

3M
Advanced Sports Inc.
American Diabetes Association
Federal Highway Administration
QBP
Trek Bicycle Corporation

\$2,500+

Alta Planning + Design

\$1,000+

Florida Freewheelers, Inc.

\$100+

Bike Walk Connecticut

INDIVIDUALS

\$1,000+

Jane Schnell

\$500+

Chelsea Gomez
Steve Sanders
Anonymous
Ted Sweeney
Barb Walsh

\$100+

Monty Andrews
Susan Barrows
Thomas Bayard
Larry Beane
David Berning
Bruno Boettcher
B. Bowers
Bradshaw Family
Robin Brandt
Jim Burns
Max Buten
Joseph Calandra
Louis Carson
Vinny Celenza
John Clement
Richard Cronemeyer
Clint Culpepper
Bruce Day
Wendell Dilling
James Duba
C. Eric Eades

Tom Engstrom
John Fetzer
Michael Flueckiger
Ralph Garboushian
Elliott Gartner
Lynne Goldsmith
James Goodwin
Peter Hallson
Havenga Family
Joel Hoback
Robert Hoel
Eric Holtz
Diane Houslanger
Howard Family
George and Laura Ivey
Jack Johnson
Charles King & Family
Edward Kleinbard
Amy Kristoff
Peter Lee
Kathy Lenzmeier
Laurence Lieberman
Patrick Marek
Shirley Martin
Laura McCarthy
Donna McMillen
James Mees
Jennifer Melot
Michael Miller
Mylene Mogendorff
Paul Moul
Bill Nesper
Gene Oh
Lisi Oliver
Lauren Parker
Chad Pickard
David Pines
Paul Quick
Steve Rankin
Samantha Reis
Ralph Robinson
Deb Salls
Judd Schechtman
Janet Segall
Walter Seifert
John Seyfarth
Jim Sheehan
Meredith Slaughter
Richard Slaymaker
Stephen Strasburg
Thomas Talley
Thompson Family
Claudia Trapp
Dorothy Wallace & Family
Thomas Williams
Jim Yglesias

CAST YOUR VOTE FOR LEAGUE BOARD

The League's Board of Directors serves a critical role in guiding the organization to a sustainable and vibrant future. The Board is made up of both board-appointed and member-elected seats — and currently, there are three open seats and four candidates for those member-elected spots. We need YOUR votes to determine who will join the board for the next three years.

The League follows a preferential voting system, meaning each voter will rank their choices from 1 to 4. Log in to bikeleague.org/vote to cast your vote through our membership portal or mail in a paper ballot, which must include a name and member number on the outside envelope, to ensure both privacy and legitimacy. Please postmark ATTN: Election. Individual members have one vote; family members have two votes. All votes will be through secret ballot. The deadline to cast your ballot electronically and to postmark your vote is December 27.

Below are descriptions of the four candidates for the board; current board members are marked with an asterisk. If you have any questions about procedure, please contact liz@bikeleague.org.



JENNIFER LAURITA

The League's 2014 Educator of the Year, Jennifer Laurita holds a masters degree in education and a bachelor's

of science degree in environmental sci-

ence. As a League Cycling Instructor, Laurita has learned first-hand the concerns and needs of the League's membership base, including the continuing need for education and development of programs to empower all forms and levels of cyclists to safely and legally ride their bikes, regardless of dedicated facilities or built infrastructure. As a Coach, she has traveled the country training new LCIs in the best cycling methodologies, while working to ensure a consistent training program across all modalities of cycling. Laurita's goals include empowering and enabling people to safely and legally share the road with vehicles, while taking ownership of the cyclist's responsibility in that arena. Laurita is particularly dedicated to teaching trainers how to create inclusive learning environments for all students.



MATT MOORE*

Matt Moore currently serves as General Counsel and Risk Manager at Quality Bicycle Products, Inc.

in Bloomington, Minnesota. He received his law degree from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and also holds degrees in philosophy and history from St. Olaf College. Moore serves on the Board of Directors of the Bicycle Products Supplier's Association, a bicycle industry trade group, and serves as Chair of the BPSA's

Legislative Committee. Moore is also a Director of the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists; a founder and past President of the Minneapolis Off-Road Cycling Advocates and serves on the Legislative Committee of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota where he helps formulate changes to Minnesota's bike laws. In addition to being a member-elected League board member, Moore is also a Director of the bike-sharing system, Nice Ride Minnesota. Matt, his family and his bike collection have lived in Minneapolis for over 25 years.



ROBERT OPLIGER

Robert Opplinger couples enthusiasm for cycling with professional expertise as a sports scientist and a commitment to

civic advocacy and bike promotion. He's an avid bike commuter and tour cyclist, League Life Member, a League Cycling Instructor, and National Bike Summit attendee. In addition to being on the board of his local bike advocacy organizations, he co-founded Iowa City's Bike to Work Week and promotes bike rodeos at area grade schools. Professionally, Opplinger participates in the leadership of the American College of Sports Medicine and has hosted League staff at ACSM's national meeting to discuss topics of mutual interest. Opplinger believes his personal and professional experience and dedication would be an asset to the League and he would

encourage cooperative efforts with like-minded organizations.



JOHN SIEMIATKOSKI*

John Siemiatkoski, current Board chair, is a Certified Fund Raising Executive and event producer. While at Blackbaud, Inc., he implemented web sites for more than 30 non-profit organizations and has extensive experience

in the non-profit leadership, including the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), where he increased revenue from his chapter's bicycle tours from \$1.4 to \$2.6 million. Siemiatkoski sits on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (serving as board President for four years) and has been an active League Cycling Instructor for years, educating more than 450 students. On the League Board, Siemiatkoski has served on the Development, Education, and Governance committees, as well as

board chair. If re-elected, Siemiatkoski will help the League: Engage our members and followers in meaningful ways to improve bicycling where they live, work and play; enhance our resources through fundraising so we can deliver our programs to more communities; continue to hire and retain the best staff; focus our education program on delivery; and listen to and learn from our affiliated clubs and partner organizations. ■

VOTE ONLINE AT WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG/VOTE OR RETURN THE BALLOT (BELOW). WRITTEN BALLOTS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY DECEMBER 27.

≡ **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS GET ONE VOTE; FAMILY MEMBERS GET TWO VOTES** [VOTE ONLINE AT BIKELEAGUE.ORG/VOTE](http://WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG/VOTE)



BALLOT

VOTE FOR YOUR BOARD

Please list the candidates in order of preference, from first (1) to last (4). All votes must be postmarked by December 27. Mail them to the League at 1612 K St. NW, Suite 308, Washington, D.C., 20006. Please write down your name and member number on the outside of the envelope.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



BALLOT

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1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

10 STORIES THAT INSPIRED US IN 2014



With nine national programs, 20,000 members and nearly 60,000 followers on social media, we have the great privilege of seeing and hearing the positive impacts of bicycling in the lives of so many different people from so many different backgrounds. Sometimes it's a simple Tweet, sometimes a handwritten letter, sometimes a first-person narrative

published on our blog.

As we end the year and reflect on the League's 2014 accomplishments, what stands out most are those personal stories — the moments bicycling helped someone overcome a challenge, improve her life or benefit the larger community. So we're taking a look back at just a handful of stories that inspired us in 2014 and deepened our commitment to build a

Bicycle Friendly America for everyone in 2015 and beyond. » Share your story with us at <http://bit.ly/yourbikestory>

DON'T LET ANYONE STEAL YOUR JOY

By Lili Afkhami, League Development Director

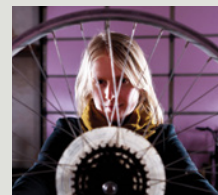
I was in the midst of a battle. It was less than a mile into the run portion of Tim-

THE NEW MOVEMENT: BIKE EQUITY TODAY

Our latest report, The New Movement: Bike Equity Today, is the culmination of several years of efforts within the League to elevate community voices to the national advocacy stage and show the existing diversity in the bike movement. For this report, we interviewed dozens of individuals and organizations — and shared some amazing stories. Visit bikeleague.org/equity to download the full report!



PASQUALINA AZZARELLO
YOUTH BIKE



REN BARGER
TULSA HUB



Josie Smith - Bicycling Saved My Heart (page 11)

berman 70.3, a half-iron distance triathlon in New Hampshire. As I shuffled along, I heard a man's voice behind me: "You're still doing better than everyone who's on the couch right now!" A lump formed in my throat as he effortlessly jogged past me. His intentions were good, I told myself. So why did those words make me feel so bad?

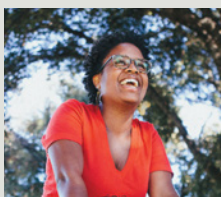
In 2006, I weighed 270 pounds. I

wore an XXL t-shirt and size 22 pants. I couldn't walk up a flight of stairs without gasping for air. I was unhappy and I knew that I had to change.

Over the course of the next three years, I lost more than 100 pounds. My progress was slow, but steady: What started out as 10 minutes on a stationary bike turned into 20 minutes on the treadmill, which turned into 30 minutes

on a spin bike. I decided a triathlon was a goal I wanted to accomplish. Soon after, I walked into the local bike shop to purchase my first road bike.

My life has never been the same since. The freedom! The joy! The effortlessness of riding a bicycle outside! I savored every training mile on my bike, Betsy, and was extremely confident as my first-ever sprint triathlon approached... until I ar-



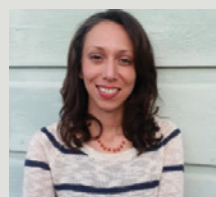
JENNA BURTON
RED, BIKE AND GREEN



DEVLYNN CHEN
LEAGUE EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL



BRIAN DRAYTON
RICHMOND SPOKES



NAOMI DOERNER
BIKE EASY



ED EWING
CASCADE BICYCLE CLUB



EQUITY LEADERS: MIGUEL RAMOS

by Miguel Ramos, Multicultural Communities for Mobility

As a person of color, I acknowledge the complexities that people who are marginalized experience because I too live with these experiences every day. I see the cultural diversity that exists within the bicycle movement and comprehend that all groups have different needs when it comes to education and empowerment. We must work together to see that we keep all diverse groups into consideration, so we can all continue moving forward in taking ownership of these safe, healthy, clean and bicycle-oriented linkages.

rived on race morning.

Everyone was so fit. I was the biggest woman there by at least 30 pounds. Despite my self-consciousness, I finished. I was among the last to finish, but I did it. And I was hooked on triathlons.

I realized why the words of the well-meaning Timberman competitor felt like a punch in the gut: He felt bad for me. He felt bad because he was on the second lap of the two-loop run course, and I was just beginning my first. He felt bad because he knew I would be one of

the last to finish.

In that moment, I could continue to compare myself to the 1,700 athletes who had already crossed the finish line, or I could reflect on how far I had come from the 270-pound woman who ran at 11 p.m. to avoid being gawked at. I chose the latter, and crossed the finish line of Timberman 70.3 with my arms raised triumphantly.

I'll never have the body of a pro triathlete. I'll probably never run a 7-minute mile. But I am a two-time marathon finisher, and a two-time 70.3 finisher. I am healthy and able-bodied. Why would I ever let arbitrary comparisons take those triumphs away from me?

Comparison is the thief of joy. You cannot compare yourself to the people around you because your story is unique. Be proud of your story — who you are, where you came from, and where you're going next. And don't let anyone steal your joy.



Lili Afkhami

SLOW ROLL REVELATIONS

By Steve Clark, League Bicycle Friendly Community Specialist

Initiated in 2010 by Detroit Bike City co-founders Jason Hall and Mike MacKool, Slow Roll is a mass bicycle ride that takes place every Monday night in the Motor City — and has grown by leaps and bounds in just a few years. Now Michigan's largest weekly bike ride, Slow Roll emphasizes inclusivity, community, safety and celebration. "Slow Roll is organized by a few, but it is owned by many," says MacKool. "I say this because it is the people who come together to ride bikes on a Monday night that makes this possible, that makes it so amazing, inviting and fun; the people are what makes a simple bike ride so impactful on our community."

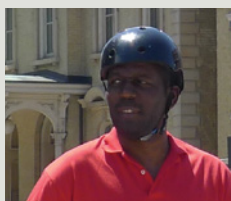
I was in Detroit for a late-August Slow Roll ride, and joined more than 4,000 people biking through a variety of neighborhoods and commercial districts, taking in the unique "art projects, community gardens, beautiful architecture, historic locations, new projects, and uniquely amazing Detroit spots" in this city that is constantly reinventing itself.

We're proud to live in a democracy, but outside of voting, many of us never truly exercise our rights to organize, speak out or simply celebrate life. For Slow Roll, no registration fees are collected, no permits are applied for, and there are no overhead costs for police or barricades — just people spontaneously showing up to ride and celebrate their community.

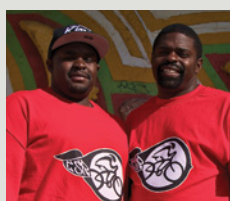
When people make the choice to use this public space as cyclists and not as motorists the road suddenly becomes



CHEMA HERNANDEZ GIL
SAN FRANCISCO BICYCLE COALITION



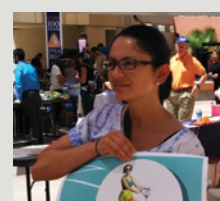
KEITH HOLT
WISCONSIN BIKE FED.
MILWAUKEE BIKE WORKS



JOHN JONES
EAST SIDE RIDERS



DOROTHY LE
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY,
BIKING PUBLIC PROJECT



MELISSA LUGO
VELO PASO



Slow Roll

transformed. In a car, we want to see fewer drivers; with bikes, the more, the merrier! Consciousness is raised; bike culture advances. Happy faces, all ages and abilities, people from all walks of life... enjoying fellow human beings and truly celebrating urban space which hours earlier was filled with stressed-out, isolated drivers battling impatience, frustration and road rage.

I've never seen such a wonderful mix of women and men, girls and boys, people of all colors, backgrounds and ages! Especially with the emphasis on slow, I was able to experience the bicycle as truly a great equalizer, a device that can bring us together: one gigantic, happy family of humankind. And for that, I shall never forget the Slow Roll.

A PRINCIPAL BECOMES A ROLL MODEL

By Jim Silcott, National Bike Challenge participant

When my daughter and my grandson, who live in Australia, came home this summer to live with me, I gave her my car to get around. As a principal, I decided it would be a great goal to ride each of the 178 student days to school this year. As a

57-year-old man, I wanted to prove to my students, as well as my teachers, that you can accomplish goals at any age!

All of my students now know that I ride my bike and are especially excited if they see me on the road while they are driving in their car with their parents. In the afternoon, the students know "Mr. Silcott is heading home" when I roll up the legs on my pants, put on my reflective vest and rainbow colored helmet. More students are now riding to school and both



Jeremiah Galvin

kids and parents ask me about bicycling, equipment and safe routes around Columbus.

Bicycling has had a profound effect on my life, especially over the past four years, as I've gone from a recreational, infrequent rider to a daily bicyclist. I'm in the best shape of my adult life, having lost almost 80 pounds, and the morning ride into school and the evening ride home are great opportunities to clear my head, calm my soul and put everything into perspective about what is important in life. I smile the whole way!

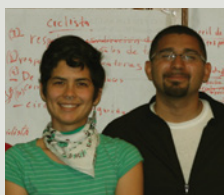
SUPPORTING FAMILY IN A TIME OF NEED

By Jeremiah Galvin, National Bike Challenge participant

Following a negative medical diagnosis for my wife, my weight ballooned in just a few months. I turned to comfort foods and television to deal with the stress of her illness and was quickly losing any benefit received from doing the National Bike Challenge the summer before. I was unable to look further than her struggles and thought little of my own health.

One day, as I walked through the hospital lobby, I saw a bicycle placed in memory of a charity ride the summer before. I stood there so long, with tears in my eyes, that security approached me to ask me if I needed any help.

At that moment, I realized I had to get control of my own situation. The doctors were taking care of my wife, but it was up to me to take care of myself, to be there for my family and be a positive role model for our children.



ALLISON MANNOS
MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES
FOR MOBILITY



SAM OLLINGER
BIKESD



KAREN OVERTON
RECYCLE-A-BICYCLE



ANTHONY TAYLOR
MAJOR TAYLOR BICYCLING CLUB
OF MINNESOTA



ELIZABETH WILLIAMS
CALI BIKE TOURS

I got back on my bike that afternoon. The first ride was short, 11 miles, and I had to stop twice to catch my breath. In time, I lengthened my rides. I started commuting to work, 20 miles one way, and carpooling home. Then I began commuting to and from work by bike a few times a week and added 50 mile rides on the weekends. I also became the bike advocate for my company leading the charge for the National Bike Challenge. To push myself, I signed up for my first century ride — the same ride that the bicycle in the lobby of the hospital represented. I signed the bike that year and can now see my signature on display.

By the end of summer 2013 my weight had dropped, my wife was doing great, and I had a much better take on life. Now, I'm in a better position, physically and mentally, to be there for my family.

WE BIKE TO DC

By Carolyn Szczepanski, League Communications Director

More than once, Liz Jose had to look at her fellow organizers and ask, "At what point do we stop in the interest of riders' safety?"

It was a journey of more than 260 miles from New York City, NY, to Washington, DC and the late-February weather was just short of perilous. It wasn't just cold — it was ski-goggles-to-keep-your-tears-from-freezing frigid. The gusting wind was slicing through Gore-Tex like butter, blowing in a deluge of snow that would paralyze the East Coast for days.

Still, Jose knew that it would take an ultimatum to put the brakes on the 10 diverse women riding from the Big Apple to the National Bike Summit. "We were so motivated as a group," Jose said, "that no one was going to give in."

The logistics, the fundraising, the distance were a level of challenge not yet broached by the still-young, all-volunteer organization. But, even in just a few short years, WE Bike NYC leaders had cultivated relationships with other women's cycling groups — like Women Bike Philadelphia, and the Washington Area Bicyclist



BIKING FOR LIFE *by Kristen Eagle, founder of VeloHut*

Five years ago, I was told I have bone cancer and there was little that could be done. They told me I would make it six months at the most ... I decided that I wasn't just going to accept this. My doctor suggested I change my diet completely and find an activity that would give me a lot of exercise. Cycling seemed the perfect choice — it represented fun, releasing my inner child, as well as health and fitness. After three years of pushing my body beyond its limits, I was able to tell those previous doctors I was now two and a half years past my "expiration."

Association. "With the confidence they showed in WE Bike NYC, we thought, yeah, let's do it," Jose recalled.

The "WE Bike to DC" ride was more than a means of transportation to the nation's biggest bike advocacy event — it was a statement.

"Watching every woman on this trip overcome personal struggles to accomplish our collective goal was really inspiring," Jose said. "Some riders struggled to slow down, while others found it difficult

to keep up. Every single person on this trip struggled in some way and we all supported each other and overcame those difficulties to arrive in Washington, D.C. together. My motivation on the trip was to show that people who ride bikes look like all the people on this trip: young, old, thin, heavy, experienced, not experienced, white, black and Latina. There is no one 'cyclist.' Anyone can be on a bike and this trip was a chance to show that."

When the group rolled up to the steps



We bike to Washington

of the Capitol in their matching purple jackets and smiles of accomplishment, their success rippled nationwide. "It wasn't only the physical feat of biking all those miles," Jose explained, "but the fact that we were carving out a place for ourselves in the bike world."

HOW BICYCLING HEALED MY HEART

By Josie Smith, Decorah, Iowa

When I purchased my bike in 2012, I didn't realize divorce was on the horizon. I had struggled for years trying to find ways to connect with my then-husband, and, when I found out how fun riding a bike was, I wanted him to share that experience with me. But our relationship was too far gone.

On the weekends, I felt trapped and alone, all while sitting with him on the couch. For five years, we had been trying to live a life that didn't exist anymore, but neither one of us wanted to be the "bad guy." Still, we were both suffocating.

I rode daily and talked to myself a lot. I pedaled to break through the scattered energy that would build up within me. My rides were a time to clear my head, sort out my thoughts, and give myself some freedom from the "real world" prob-

lems. I wanted us to be free — and finally I told him I felt our marriage was over.

The end of my marriage was announcing to the world that "I will survive!" — that I didn't need a husband to help me with bills or rent, that I could live on my own and be financially stable. But, before that, I had never lived on my own. It was an enormous step — and I was scared to death.

Riding was the one way that I could remind myself that I did have a "can do" attitude and that I could indeed accomplish things. For so long, I had told myself "you can't ride a bike," but I proved to myself that concept was wrong.

A friend started to join me on my ride. He provided much-needed support and encouragement. He helped me overcome obstacles that I felt were too difficult. He helped me prove to myself that I could do it. And he still does.

Riding my bike not only helped to heal my mind but it also helped heal my heart.

TORNADO OF FUN

By Madi Carlson, founder of the blog *Family Ride*

I'm not a novice when it comes to leading group rides, with two years of Kidi-



MORE THAN SELLING BIKES by Chad Pickard, owner of Spoke-N-Sport in Sioux Falls, SD

When I bought Spoke-N-Sport 13 years ago I didn't really know what I was doing. Buy low, sell high was about all the business instruction I had ... Over the winter, I read more about low pay in the bike industry, and, although our payroll is average, I wanted to offer something better. I wanted to create a culture where employees were excited to come to work, excited to contribute to work and excited to share their work with others — but I knew we had to raise the bar. Pay was raised across the board and expectations were raised a bit too.

Alaskabike!

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Madi Carlson

cal Mass family rides and Critical Lass ladies' rides under my belt, but my first bike train, on Bike to School Day, was a beast of a whole different nature.

The kids and I left home an hour earlier than normal and arrived to a barren playground.

On a nearby rock I set up a simple helmet-decorating station, just a pile of pipe cleaners and my pipe-cleaner-heart-topped helmet as inspiration. And then we waited. And someone showed up! I'm lucky I didn't scare mom and daughter off as I profusely thanked them for coming out. Then a few more filtered in. Before I knew it, the park was teeming with people!

We ended up with 91 participants — a couple on scooters, a couple walking parents, but primarily bikers. Ninety-one!!! I'm not sure when my son's school last had a bike train, but this was the first in our two years of attending. I can only describe it as a tornado of fun.

I gave a quick safety speech about riding slowly, sticking together, kids to

the right/grownups to the left, but as soon as we crossed our one and only busy intersection next to the park my train threatened to derail. I started out the engineer of the train, but the bigger kids weren't keen on riding slow — especially once we reached the steep downhill portion. I watched in vain as they gleefully chugged ahead, not wanting to abandon the cautious smaller kids behind and beside me.

While it was so much more chaotic than I had anticipated, our 0.9-mile ride from park to school was mostly along the Wallingford Neighborhood Greenway and then in our school zone where drivers are used to seeing kids on bikes.

We didn't all arrive in one big blob of bikes, but the fast kids made it in safely, the cautious and correctly positioned kids pedaled in triumphantly, and all their brains were primed to concentrate thanks to our ride. It was the most giggly ride I've ever been part of and I have to say I can't wait to do it again! ■■■

AMERICAN BICYCLIST

THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS

The League of American Bicyclists mission is to lead the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. As leaders, our commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change. The League represents the interests of the nation's 57 million bicyclists. With a current membership of 300,000 affiliated cyclists, including 25,000 individuals and 700 organizations, the League works to bring better bicycling to your community. Contact League officers, directors or staff at League of American Bicyclists, 1612 K Street, NW, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20006-2850, 202-822-1333; bikeleague@bikeleague.org, fax: 202-822-1334.

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"I became a life member to invest in the future of bicycling and help the League continue our movement's growth. I try to improve bicycling in my community and I know my efforts are enhanced by the League. Being a life member broadens my efforts, and benefits riders from coast to coast."
- Jennifer Fox, San Francisco, Calif.



"I became a life member because I believe in the League's work. Education programs; the Bicycle Friendly America program; and the National Bike Summit make a difference in my life and in the lives of bicyclists across the country!"
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