

## **Good things can happen from bad experiences!**

**By Kris Sudroveh Ami (P.S. from Don Ami)**

In April 2002 after working there for 21 years, I abruptly was part of a corporate RIF (reduction in force) when Arthur Andersen imploded after the Enron scandal. Being single and responsible for myself, I needed to decide what my next steps would be to continue my work life. Given a severance package, I decided to take the summer off from working to regroup and figure things out. Thus began the "Summer of Kris".

In this self-discovery time, I decided to focus on doing things I liked to do, rather than what I had to do. One of those was to ride my bike more. But since I just had an old steed, I decided it was worthwhile to buy a new bike. I went into my local bike shop (ABC in Arlington Heights) and was waited on by a crusty old guy whose name I later learned was Jim (Shoe) Shoemaker. He sold me a hybrid bike and told me about a local bike club I could join to get involved with other bike riders.

I joined the Arlington Heights Bicycle Club in 2002. Many years prior (1980s), I had been part of the Mt. Prospect Bike Club for one year but had not continued after that. I started riding with the AHBC Leisure group on Sundays with rides led by none other than Jim Shoe! As I got more involved and rode more often, I found my way to doing longer rides with the Intermediate group. During the course of those rides and some Tuesday night rides, I met many riders, some who I remembered from many years earlier in the Mt. Prospect Club (most specifically Don Ami).

The Summer of Kris was a fun time with many bike rides, lots of memories and meeting many new friends. But, alas, all good things must come to an end and in the fall of 2002, I had to go back to work. I found a job in the suburbs (instead of commuting downtown), which left me a bit more time to stay involved in cycling and active in the Club.

Fast forward to the summer of 2003. With all the bike rides I had been doing, I was getting to know many cyclists better and getting more involved in the Bike Club. I became aware of a weeklong ride in Canada from Toronto to Montreal along the St. Lawrence Sea Way. Don Ami had sent it out to the Club to see if anyone was interested in participating. He said the trip was NO CAMPING, which was right up my alley! I decided to join the group, along with Carl Jester. I thought it would be a good opportunity to see a new area and spend time with Don, who I was beginning to be interested in (although he didn't know that as of yet!).

It ended up that only the three of us did the ride from the Club. But we had a great time and by the end of the week I knew I wanted to spend more time with Don. It took him a little bit longer to come to that conclusion. But by September 2003, we were a couple and ultimately married in July, 2005. And, it can be said, the "rest is history"!

So, see, good things CAN happen from bad experiences!



P.S. from Don Ami

There is a story as to how the Toronto to Montreal tour came to be.

In the spring of 2003, I was looking for a bike tour to add to GRABAAWR which I had done many times. I found the Bon Ton Roulet in the Finger Lakes region of New York. I signed up for it and sent information about it out to the club. Several club members also signed up to join me. Four weeks before we were to leave my boss told me he couldn't give me the time off so I could not go on the ride. The Bon Ton folks were very nice and refunded my money, but that left me without a weeklong tour.

Back to the search I went looking for a replacement. I found the Toronto-Montreal tour and again sent it out to the club to see if anyone would be interested in joining me. This time as it was close to leaving and so many people had already committed to the Bon Ton, only Carl and Kris joined me. It turned out to be a great tour and a lot of fun. It also got Kris and me together and that too was a great thing.

As for the Bon Ton Roulet, even though I was the one that found it and the Club has since done it a second time I still have never ridden it!