

## My First Fall with Clipless Pedals

Around 30 years ago I decided that my knees and joints had had enough jogging, so a friend, Bob Fox, suggested that I try biking. Bob was, and is, an avid bicyclist having a number of bikes in his possession including a Kestrel, Cannondale, Lemond, and an old Motobecane.

I had started riding with him on a heavy Trek Hybrid but he urged me to move up to a Road Bike so that I might have a better chance to ride at his pace. He insisted that I equip my new Trek 2300 with a Brooks Leather Saddle and of course, Clipless Pedals. Not knowing any different, I followed his suggestions.

My wife, Kathy, asked me if this kind of pedal was safe since I was basically attached to my bike like downhill skiers are affixed to their skis. I assured her that Bob had said that many good bicyclists had this kind of SPD Pedal on their bikes and that I should, too. He claimed that it would make me more efficient in my pedaling.

Excited about trying out my new Road Bike, I took a camping trip to a Wisconsin Campground with my family and of course brought my Trek. We camped near Tomahawk and found some nearby trails that I could ride. Excitedly, I took off on a trail and soon came upon a downhill with a turn at the bottom that I proudly negotiated. Unfortunately, after making the turn I hit some bumps in the trail and went down. I couldn't get out of my clipless pedals and fell hard on the ground. Feeling bruised and battered and as if I had sprained my arm, I walked my bike back to the campground.

Kathy refrained from saying "I told you so" and suggested that Bob may have been a little presumptive in assuming that I was at his level of bicycle prowess. Much chagrined and sore, I rode my bike that weekend, carefully clipping into and out of my SPDs hoping that I wouldn't repeat my fall.

Since then I have fallen only a few times, many with control so that I took more "graceful" falls. Having mastered Clipless Pedals those many years ago has made me a more efficient biker, though I can't claim to be a "good" bicyclist. Every bike I have purchased including my six-year-old Waterford has been equipped with the SPD "Clipless" Pedals, for I wouldn't ride without them.