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ARLINGTON HEIGHTS BICYCLE CLUB

September 2022

Arlington Heights Bicycle Club, rolling with our community since 1971.

Biking is Always on my Mind

True confession: I did not ride my bike for three weeks. THREE WEEKS!!

The cause for this extended absence from my cycling avocation was a two-week Canadian Rockies bus/ train tour that had been postponed for two years due to COVID. (The additional week was due to the packing and unpacking required for extended international travel.)

At first, the aqua-colored lakes and majestic mountains fully occupied my mind. Then I saw "them" in the distance through the bus window the cyclists, my people, pedaling in a group up a long hill, probably in pain, and enjoying every minute.

My attention snapped back to the reason I was there when we slowed to watch a black bear, a brown bear and two elk grazing on the roadside. I was minorly offended by the bus driver's attempt at humor, referring

to cyclists as "meals on wheels" for the hears

When the bus pulled over and emptied out so that we could view a bald eagle nesting atop a tree on the shore of a lake that actually empties each

year like a bathtub, I gravitated to the large SAG wagon that was parked nearby.

"How far will your group ride today?" I asked of the man preparing food for the bikers' arrival. "About 100 to 150 today," he responded. Initially amazed, I then realized he was measuring in kilometers. My calcula-



tion dropped the distance to 65 to 90 miles, still amazing given that there was not a flat stretch of road anywhere on their route. I think these riders experienced more elevation change that day than I experience

over several months back home.

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Welcome

No matter how far, how fast, where you ride, or why -- the Arlington Heights Bicycle Club has something for you: leisurely to advanced-paced rides; social functions; and a commitment to safe riding. And we don't take ourselves too seriously. Come ride with us!

The Arlington 500 Rides into 2022!

The Arlington 500 Rides into 2022

by Roger Hitchings

Our "annual" Arlington 500 was a success by any standard. Thank you to our club members who volunteered for the many tasks needed to make this event a success. Our participants overwhelmingly said that they greatly enjoyed the ride, the food, the route, and, most of all, the smiles and dedication of our volunteers.

We made a profit of \$5,242 from a total income of \$10,890 before direct



SEPT 28

Member Meeting

Vince Boyer of 7 Mile Cycles will talk about the latest in bike equipment and accessories.



Member Meeting

AHBC member Brian Larson will discuss city planning for safe cycling.

North Carolina Outer Banks 5-Day Cycling Adventure

by Cary Cohen

North Carolina Outer Banks was a 5-day cycling adventure enjoyed by three AHBC amigos — Ron Silverman, Paul Riback and Cary Cohen. We had a wonderful experience with Carolina Tailwinds bike tours. This was our second tour with them, as we did their Door County ride the year before. They arranged everything for us, and we were well-supported. On this ride we chose to use their bikes rather than packing our own. In total we rode 162 miles on this trip. There were 18 other bike riders and a staff of three very knowledgeable guides, who discussed the rich history of the communities we rode through. We stayed at country inns and boutique hotels. Most meals were included in our package price, and the food was amazing. I even ate fish that was previously unknown to me. (I need to get out more. Drum fish, anyone? Delicious.)

Our trip was rich in early American and maritime history. We rode through many early fishing villages, towns, and settlements along the Outer Banks, some dating back to the1700's, that contributed to the development of America. We started our trip in New Bern, NC. We took two ferries, crossing the Pamlico Sound, landing on Ocracoke Island for a 27-mile ride. We then squeezed in a wonderful 3-hour kayak excursion before our overnight stay at the "Castle." We caught another ferry back to Cedar Island the following morning, ending up back in New Bern. I've left out so many wonderful locations in our Intracoastal Waterway visit that were too numerous to mention. We had plenty of time to explore wonderful sites and even learned, while visiting the Beaufort Maritime Museum, how Blackbeard lost his head.

All in all, it was an enjoyable bike tour. We have scheduled another trip this October with the same touring company to the Palm Coast, Saint Augustine and Amelia Island, Florida.

May tailwinds always be at your back!

The AHBC Bike Swap Continues to be a Success!

by Dave Martin and Karen Aldrich

After two years of cancelling the bike swap due to COVID-19, AHBC had a great Bike Swap on May 14, 2022!

This year we simplified the Bike Swap process by accepting only bicycles, automobile bike racks, and tag-alongs, therefore reducing our intake staff (runners and computer operators) from requiring over 25 people to about 18 people, while generating about the same dollar amount in sales.

Thanks to the terrific AHBC

volunteers, the very prepared and motivated sellers and buyers, and last, but not least, the fantastic weather, the



Bike Swap ran easily and efficiently throughout the day. The AHBC volunteers even had a relaxed hour during which they purchased numerous new (to them) bikes prior to the Bike Swap opening.

> We accepted 347 items for sale and sold 198 of them. All in all, a very successful day! As usual, about 70% of our sales occurred before 11 a.m., so it pays to wake up early on Swap day!

Dave and Karen were glad to see that our last Bike Swap as leaders was a resounding success! Again, we thank all of the AHBC Bike Swap vol-Continued, Page 7



Annual Banquet

A great chance to socialize with your fellow AHBC members and celebrate another season of cycling fun! We will enjoy a meal, cash bar, fun, and prizes. More details to come.



Holiday Lights Ride

Get your costumes and lights prepared and come out for the annual Holiday Lights Ride!



The Amishland and Lakes Bike Ride (and Eat-a-thon)

by Debbie Watson

The Amishland and Lakes Bike Ride is an annual two day event sponsored by the Michiana Bicycle Association since 1975. The ride generally takes place the last full weekend of July, which this year was July 30-31. 600 riders had pre-reigstered for the event, which starts at Lakeland High School in La Grange, Indiana. From the northwest suburbs of Chicago, it is approximately 170 miles and takes about 3.5 hours to drive.

Two days of biking wasn't enough

Continued, Amishland, Page 11



500, Continued from Page 2 expenses of \$5,648.

We had a total of 289 registrants, with 267 utilizing our new BikReg.com online registration website and 22 riders registering with cash/check at Barrington High School on ride day. Of the 289 registrants, 265 riders participated in the ride. These riders were supported by 69 AHBC member volunteers.

We introduced premium Ride with GPS functionality this year, with 95 riders utilizing this new benefit.

Almost 50% of the registrants said that they were riding our longest route of 71 miles. The vast majority of the riders were over 40 years old (81%) and male (74%.) The median age of our participants was 54.

Most of our riders were either previous riders (40%) or referred by a friend or family member (34%). Other sources of new riders were the Ride Illinois Ride Guide (9%), a bike club (8%), social media (7%), AHBC website (5%), and bike shops (4%). The vast majority of our riders reside in the city of Chicago or the north, northwest, or west suburbs.

Here are a few of the of the many rider comments about our 2022 Arlington 500:

Thank you for a great ride. I have no suggestions for improvements. As good as any community ride I have been on and better than most! -- David S.

Fun ride, fun day. Thanks to all the volunteers. -- Diane & Jim R.

Awesome time! The support at the rest stop was awesome! Plenty of nutrition to power us through the entire course! This was the best ride I have done this year. I hope to do this event next year! I loved the clean indoor bathrooms! Don't change a thing!!! A++++ -- Terry K.

Overall I would rate the event a 10 out of 10. Look forward to next year. --Keith J.

Loved it! Wouldn't change a thing. ---

Colleen T.

It was great! I especially loved the pickle shots. And the volunteers. Thank you! --- Bobbe G.

See you next year! -- Michael F.

What's all this talk about GRAIL? by Gary Gilbert

I assure you it has nothing to do with Monty Python or a healthcare company based in California or any other worldwide phenomenon.

In the early years, AHBC often had multi-day bike rides, starting with something called The Milk Run in Wisconsin, overnight trips to Vermont, and others. Many of these rides included panniers or bicycle trailers and tents.

You can be assured that GRAIL rides use motels rather than tents these days. GRAIL is a 2-day ride with an overnight stop. We carry minimal clothing and necessary items on our bicycles or in backpacks (or sometimes a SAG vehicle miraculously appears.) GRAIL was created out of a desire to offer different kinds of rides to members, to explore other areas. and to extend our reach into the larger cycling community. It is part AHBC tradition that includes theme rides, rides at a variety of paces and distances, community events, daytime rides, evening rides, weekend rides, invitational rides, and more. Our hope is to inspire you to create, invent, and participate in a variety of rides and adventures.

GRAIL first appeared on the club calendar in 2005. We rented a bus which took 17 of us and our bicycles to Clinton, Iowa on a Friday night. We rode home to Arlington Heights in 2 days, 80 miles each day. Saturday was rainiy and the Sunday was 109 degrees, but we all made it back safely.

GRAIL 2 in 2006 was Wisconsinbound. We left our cars at a bike shop's parking lot in northern Milwaukee and rode to Sheboygan on Saturday, returning to our cars on Sunday.

GRAIL 3 in 2007 was a multi-state adventure. We met at Milo's house in Cary and rode to Janesville, Wisconsin. After spending the night in Janesville, we returned home the next day.

GRAIL 4 in 2008 was a different kind of excursion. We all managed to get to Morris, Illinois on a Friday night. We rode Saturday on the I&M Canal to Ottawa and back to Morris. Sunday we rode back to Dave Martin's house in Hoffman Estates. With 25-mile-per-hour headwinds and it was a long long slog back to Dave's house. Many took advantage of a SAG ride back. There are photos of this ride on the club website.

GRAIL took a hiatus for a few years and no one remembers why. It might have been the wind from the previous year. To be honest, GRAIL was never numbered until we sat down to reconstruct the history.

GRAIL 5 in 2016 we went to the middle of Illinois and cycled west from Bloomington to Peoria and returned home the next day. Some of us refused to climb the bridge over the Illinois River, while others had to seek out a replacement tire.

GRAIL 6 in 2017 we returned to Bloomington but rode east to Champaign and returned to our cars the next day.

GRAIL 7 in 2018 was a bit different. We joined the Amish Country Tour in Arthur, Illinois for the first day, and the second day we rode from Arcola to Charleston and returned the same day to the starting point. This year was memorialized by dogs chasing us on country roads. To be more precise, dogs are attracted by the rider in the front but quickly are only interested in the rider in the back. To be even more precise, being chased by a greyhound often means being passed by that same dog. There are photos of this ride on the club website.

GRAIL 8 in 2022 occurred in August. We made our way to the great "city" of Toulon, Illinois (population around 1300) and rode the Rock Island State Park Trail to Peoria, spent the night in Peoria and returned home the next day. This year, for the first time, GRAIL was on a Monday and Tuesday rather than Saturday and Sunday. Weather was perfect, mid 70s, and the trail was mostly shaded by a canopy of trees. There will be photos of this year's ride on the club website soon. In Wyoming, Illinois, we happened to meet the Illinois Department of Natural Resources workers who are responsible for the trail. They were full of questions about our experience and what we had to say about trail surfaces, including the holes dug by chipmunks. It was great to know that they take their stewardship of the trail seriously. Those of us who rode on GRAIL 8 were surprised by the beauty of the trail in Central Illinois. People we talked to along the way were inspired. We did raise a few eyebrows when we rode into the lobby of the Sheraton in Peoria. The parking valet scurried away. The desk clerks took it all in stride.

GRAIL 9 will happen in 2023, details to be invented next year. If you have ideas, send them to Gary Gilbert. He already has a few ideas of his own. Be inspired. Cycling can take you on adventures and allow you to explore new places. And, oh yes, what in the world does GRAIL mean? Pick one:

Gary's Ride Across ILlinois

Gary's Ride Away from ILlinois

Gary's Ride Around ILlinois

Bicycle Lighting: Reasons and Selection by Ford Sakata

Every club member knows that cycling is a fun way to stay fit. That said, road riding comes with some risk because we share the road with other vehicles. Distracted motor vehicle driving is the primary reason that I ride with flashing lights, front and back, especially during daylight hours! My thinking is that the more visible I am, and from a greater distance, the better chance a distracted driver has of noticing me.

The above highlights one of the two reasons for having good lights on your bike, that is to BE SEEN. The other reason to have a good set of lights is to SEE. Knowing your needs will help you decide what kind of lighting is best for you.

Lighting to Be Seen

The good news is that almost any good bike light instantly makes a cyclist more visible. Choose a set with both front and rear lights. Most front lights have clear lenses, but an amber lens (think "Caution" light) will make you stand out from everything else even better. Rear lights are always red. To improve your visibility to others, consider the following:

· Flashing lights attract more attention than steady lighting.

· Firmly mount both lights so that they are level. This ensures that the focal point of the lights is more visible to traffic.

· Mount an additional front light on your helmet. The movement of the light as you move your head increases visibility.

· For daylight hours, brighter is better.

· For riding in the dark, choose a light which can be switched to steady (nonflashing), which is better for your night vision and won't blind drivers.

 \cdot For riding at dusk or in the dark, consider adding wheel lights or spoke lights because moving/rotating lighting is almost impossible to ignore.

Lighting to See With

This is specialized lighting which needs to be bright enough to see the road in front of you without blinding oncoming cars. For this reason, choose a front light with lenses that focus lighting below the horizon, like a car headlight. It should also have the capability to adjust brightness to your environment because lighting that is too bright will wash out the road, making it harder to judge distances and identify dips and holes in the road. The rear light does not need to be anything special but should be in "steady mode" to avoid blinding cyclists and drivers behind you. Because of the specialized lenses and high capacity batteries, front lights for seeing tend to be more expensive.

I have tried many brands and styles of lighting, and I choose different lights depending on where I am riding and when. There are many good brands of lighting, but the ones that I use most often are NiteRider, Radlicht, and Dinotte Lighting.





Bike Swap, Continued from Page 3

unteers over the years. Without you, we would not be able to run this fun event that is such a wonderful service to the community.

Roger H., Kim H., Gary G. and Bill K. are already working on modifications for the 2023 Bike Swap. Please direct your constructive suggestions towards them to continue to make the future Arlington Heights Bike Swap the best that it can be.

Happy Trails to You

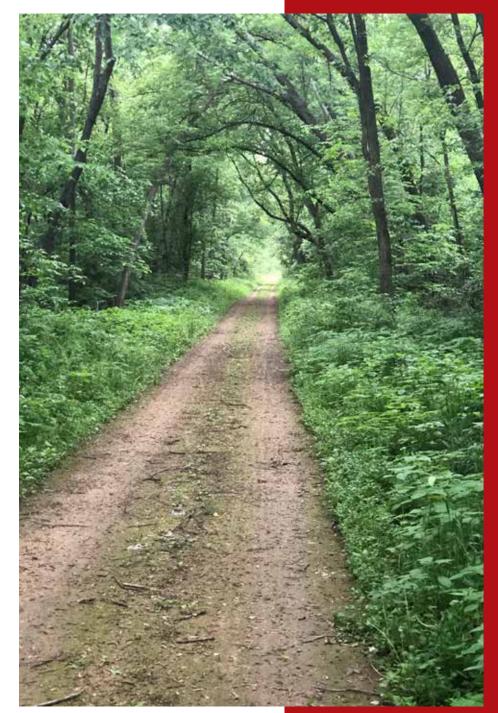
When some of us were young, <u>Dale Evans</u> wrote those words and Roy Rogers sang them. They referred to riding a horse. Today, at least for members of AHBC, there are many more of us riding bicycles than riding horses on trails.

Years ago the late Art Cunningham used to lead a monthly trail ride for AHBC and Wheeling Wheelmen. Paula Matzek and Gary Gilbert resurrected that option several years ago, and we have ridden many, if not all, of the trails within an hour's drive of Arlington Heights. This year we expanded our reach to 90 minutes by car to the trailhead to explore trails new to the club. Most recently we rode the Jane Addams Trail from Freeport IL to the Wisconsin state line. Most of that trail is tree-lined, so even on a hot July day, it was very rideable.

Trails have a variety of surfaces, including paved concrete, asphalt, crushed limestone, and hard packed dirt or gravel. Depending on the surface of the trail, members may ride road, hybrid, gravel, or touring bikes. Generally, compared with roads, trails have the advantage of fewer vehicles, fewer intersections, fewer turns, and fewer hazards in general. Many of the trails are former railroad beds and therefore are limited to a 2% grade, which means pretty easy riding no matter your ability. Trails are often linear, so riders can decide to ride all or a portion of a trail before turning around and returning to the starting point. It's generally pretty easy follow a trail.

Rails-to-Trails is a non-profit organization that has a mission to Build a Nation Connected by Trails. Fortunately Rails-to-Trails has a website https://www.traillink. com/ and an app, which makes it easy to find a trail anywhere in the U.S. The app provides a place for riders to leave comments and photos, so you can learn about a trail before you set out to ride it.

Earlier this year, Gary found himself in Northern Wisconsin near Eau Claire. In that area there are 75 miles of bicyclefriendly trails. He rode the Red Cedar State Trail (14.5 miles one way) and the Old Abe State Trail (28.1 miles one way).



Both were beautiful and, on a weekday, were lightly used.

In September, Jack Lichtenauer will lead an almost-annual 3-day ride on the Root River Trail near Lanesboro, Minnesota. Root River Trail features 70 miles of paved trail. Check out the dates and details on the club calendar.

Have a suggestion for a trail ride?

Let Gary or Paula know, or, better yet, schedule a trail ride yourself and put it on the club calendar.

Mind, Continued from Page 1

In subsequent days, I saw a man and woman riding together with fully-packed paniers over both wheels, and more supplies strapped to the bike frame and their bodies. I noticed they were smiling through their exhaustion.

I learned how "mountain bikes" got their name. The winter ski town of Whistler is transformed into an international haven for mountain bikers during summer months. I watched in fear as at least 300 riders in full body armor hurtled down the slopes. As soon as they reached the flat bottom, they quickly got in a long line to load their bikes onto the ski lift and repeat this madness. For me...that's a big "no."

After leaving Vancouver, our full-sized

tour bus pulled onto a large ferry with five other full-sized tour buses and about 30 cars, along with 10 cyclists lining up to be the first ones off the ship when we reached shore. What a fun interlude on a day-long bike ride! I wonder how the GPS maps their route.

Our last destination was Victoria, where we simply sat on a bench for several hours. Donna enjoyed the magnificent flower gardens and watched boats and sea planes share the scenic harbor waters that are surrounded by historic architecture. I watched the bikers.

I focused on the great variety of bikes and bikers cruising past me in the dedicated bike lanes. These bike lanes were protected from vehicles by curbs, had a yellow stripe down the middle for twoway bike traffic, and included stop lights with the red, yellow, and green appearing in the shape of a bicycle. How thoughtful. How safe!

I returned home from this extended cycling sabbatical with a greater appreciation that we are a small part of the worldwide bicycle community, and a greater appreciation for the Arlington Heights Bicycle Club, which provides me with the opportunity to enjoy riding with all of you!



Out and about on the Grand Illinois Bike Tour

Photo courtesy of Paula Matzek

Grand Illinois Bike Tour ^{by Paula Matzek}

"Oh, good! Closer to home, and it won't be as hot!" I said upon learning that this year's Grand Illinois Bike Tour would be held in central Illinois. The 2021 GIBT was in southwestern Illinois, nearly five hours from home, and the weather was uncomfortably hot for most of the week. It certainly wouldn't be that hot this year, when we would be further north, in the East Peoria/Normal/Pontiac area. The joke was on me as temperatures soared into the mid-90's again on this year's GIBT.

The good news was that, like last year, the daily routing of GIBT was excellent, with low-traffic rural roads and many miles of paved trails, including the Constitution Trail and the Route 66 Trail. And, as always, the tour was populated with friendly cyclists from all over the Midwest and beyond.

The Grand Illinois Bike tour is an annual

6-day ride which features a different area of Illinois each year. It is sponsored and run by Ride Illinois (formerly League of Illinois Bicyclists), our state advocacy organization for bicycling, and is one of their major fund-raisers.

The GIBT staff — organizers, motel/meal supervisors, luggage team, sag drivers were helpful throughout the tour. I got a chance to experience an extra dose of this helpfulness when, on Day 4 of the tour, a patch of gravel on one of the aforementioned rural roads brought me down. Ouch! Sag driver Terry got me to the ER in Pontiac and delivered my bike and fractured helmet to the motel. Driver George shuttled me to the motel when I was released from the medical center (and also rescued me on Day 5 when I somehow got stranded in downtown Pontiac!) Laurie Barsotti, who was in the motel lobby, helped me get my luggage and bicycle to my room and got me some ice for my injuries. Luckily, nothing was fractured other than my helmet, but I was unable to ride the last two days of the tour.

The Pontiac, Illinois tourist trolley, with its friendly driver, Dan, was most wel-

come, not only for shuttling those of us at the Best Western to the Hampton Inn for dinner, but also for shuttling injured me into downtown Pontiac for lunch with my biking buddies. After lunch, we enjoyed exploring the Livingston County courthouse, the Route 66 Museum, and the various outdoor murals in the downtown area.

Those of us who stayed in motels this year were grateful that, now that COVID is somewhat less threatening, the motels seemed to be more fully staffed and able to handle a large group of cyclists in a more efficient manner than those we experienced last summer. Fast food restaurants were open for indoor pick-up and dining this year, eliminating the issue of cyclists not being served due to liability issues in the drive-through lanes.

The 2023 Grand Illinois Bike Tour will take place June 11-16 in the Kewanee/ Savanna/Moline/Sterling-Rock Falls areas and will be an all-motel event, no camping. I'm sure it will be cooler there... for our hearty contingent of nine AHBC members, five of whom had done the ride before. So we drove to Indiana on Friday morning and cycled the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail the day before the organized ride. The trail is about 17 linear miles. We met at Abshire Park in Goshen, IN, which has restrooms and a large parking lot. The trail itself is paved (except for approximately 1 mile of packed, crushed limestone) and shaded. The shade can be a welcome relief at the end of July.

The trail is in the heart of Amish country. In addition to recreational cyclists like ourselves, we passed many Amish families biking, pulling a cart behind them with their children and groceries. Along the trail, we saw buffalo, sheep, horses and other farm animals. We rode east from the park through Middlebury and ended in Shipshewana. There, many of the parking lots are for horses and buggies and many of the merchants cater to the Amish. We stopped and had ice cream at the local ice cream shop, then visited the town park before tracing our way back to Abshire Park. Round trip was 36 miles. That evening many of us went out to eat at Prairie Lake Tavern in Sturgis, Michigan.

Saturday morning we met at Lakeland High School to check in at registration and receive our 2-day wrist bands. GPS directions and hard copy maps were available for all of the routes. The available Saturday routes were 22/36/50/64/100 miles, and Sunday routes were 23/29/39/50 miles. The routes were fairly flat with some rolling hills. We saw the SAG vehicles on the road several times both days of the ride, so we knew that they were available if we needed help.

Saturday's ride was the highlight of the weekend. We broke up into different distance groups, agreeing to meet up for dinner that evening at Destination 814 in LaGrange. The routes take you through the Amish farmlands, where we saw the Amish with their teams of horses working the fields, kids driving pony carts, beautiful gardens, and even three teens driving a horse and buggy pulling a fishing boat! The ride also took us along the lake area. There were plenty of rest stops, which were fully stocked with fresh fruit (local cherries, blueberries, watermelon), chips, cookies, and PB&J sandwiches. In addition to the official rest stops, some of the Amish families had set up tables in their front yards and provided homebaked goodies for a free-will offering. These included hot pretzels, cakes, doughnuts, root beer floats, and other assorted "calorie-free" treats. Luckily, the folks who had been on the ride previously alerted the newbies to bring small denomination bills so that we could donate for the goodies. Along the way there were lots of friendly bike riders to chat with, along with the Amish families, making for a very friendly vibe.

The Sunday ride had a different feel. The Amish were attending church, so they were not offering food. The official rest stops were operating, with the same types of food as on Saturday. There was very little traffic on the roads, and it appeared there were about half the number of cyclists compared to Saturday. We were able to start early on Sunday, which allowed us to get back to our cars around noon for the drive home. Two points we discovered that we will take advantage of when we return next year:

1. You can make reservations to eat with an Amish family. Based upon the great reviews of bikers who had dined with them, we all want to partake of their great cooking and hospitality.

2. There are showers available at the high school after the ride on Sunday. You just need to bring your own soap and a towel.

The ride is well priced at \$40 during early registration. This bike ride is well- supported on lightly-traveled roads and is a great way to see how life was lived over 100 years ago. I highly recommend putting this ride on your "to do" list.





Meet a Member!

Want to know more about the folks who ride with you? We're interviewing a different member each issue.

This month, we caught up with member Mary Pat Krones.

1. When and how did you learn to ride a bike?

I learned to ride a bike in the early 1970's, when I was probably 5 years old. I don't remember the how, but I am guessing my dad helped me learn how to ride! I did break my jaw riding my bike when I was 7 years old. I went head first over the handle bars and landed on my jaw! Not the best way to start a summer for a 7-year-old!

2. When and why did you join AHBC?

I joined AHBC in spring of 2021. My good friend Maureen Koziol talked about AHBC for years, and when I picked up cycling again, she got me to join! I am so glad I did; I love riding and socializing with AHBC!

3. What paced group do you usually ride with? Intermediate

4. What bike(s) do you currently own? Specialized Sirrus Specialized Roubaix

5. What is your favorite lunch stop on club rides?

Libertyville Lunch in the Park Friday.

6. Do you ride year-round?

If you count indoors on a trainer, yes.

7. What was your favorite ride or cycling event so far this season?

Amishland and Lakes. It is such a unique experience — all three days, including the Pumpkinvine Trail and the two-day event. Lots of great food, things to see, and people to meet!

8. What is the longest ride you have ever done in one day?

Last September a group of us rode the metric century (62 miles) at Evanston Bike Club's North Shore Century.

9. Did you volunteer at the Bike Swap or Arlington 500, and, if so,

what was your job?

I volunteered at the Bike Swap. I was a cashier.

10. What are your favorite noncycling activities?

Thinking about all of the additional rides I will be able to join when I retire in 6 years :)!

I also enjoy hiking, attending plays and concerts, and visiting with family and friends.