



**PETE SCHMELZER, AHBC PRESIDENT**

## My Worst Bike Ride Ever

I've been known to preach "any day on a bicycle is a very good day" to those unfamiliar with the many joys of cycling. This day would be the exception.

The plan was to ride a "solo century" starting at 7:00 a.m. – 100 miles in three segments to Elgin, Deer Grove and Busse Woods over 11 hours with my home as my rest stop. Coincidentally, I would stop in during the inspection of the home my daughter wanted to buy in Elgin.

I had only had one flat in 15 years, but I still made sure I had the spare tube, tools and CO2 cartridges. I carbo-loaded the night before and packed my hydration and snack bars. My wife would provide SAG support in the unlikely event that I would need to be rescued somewhere during the day.

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## Arlington 500 Update

**MIKE PAULSON**

The 2024 Arlington 500 is just a few weeks away as of this writing. Our event date is Sunday, June 2, 2024. This is an exciting time of year for cyclists; as the weather and our conditioning improve so does the enthusiasm for our sport! Ideally, we can carry this enthusiasm into this year's 500.

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## Riding Safety Tips

We asked and you delivered. Club members have lots of suggestions you can use to ride safer.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## Meet a Member

This month, the club interviews Sridar Peyyeti to get his spin on things.

[JOIN ON IN THE FUN](#)

## Little Free Library Ride

This spring AHBC is collaborating with the Arlington Heights Memorial Library.

[TAKE A LOOK IT'S IN A BOOK](#)

## A Discount

Sometimes a used bike has more than meets the eye.

[FIND A PENNY, PICK IT UP](#)



## Bike Safety Quiz

How knowledgeable are you about safe riding? Put yourself to the test with the following sample of questions tailored for road cyclists in Illinois.

[TEST YOUR METTLE](#)



## Can You Dig It?

New projects in Arlington Heights and nearby are putting bike projects and planning first.

[GET AROUND TOWN](#)

# Upcoming Events

**SAT., MAY 18**

**COMMUNITY BIKE RIDE**  
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**WED., MAY 22**

**MONTHLY MEMBER MEETING**  
**7:00 PM AT PIONEER PARK**

**SAT., JUNE 1**

**ARLINGTON 500 PRE-RIDE**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**

**SUN., JUNE 2**

**ARLINGTON 500 INVITATIONAL RIDE**  
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**SUN., JUNE 9 -  
FRI., JUNE 14**

**GRAND ILLINOIS BIKE TOUR**

**SAT., JUNE 22**

**AHBC PICNIC**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**

**THURS., JULY 4**

**AHBC IN THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
PARADE**

**SAT., AUG. 10**

**PROGRESSIVE DINNER RIDE**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**

**PRESIDENT**

Pete Schmelzer

**TREASURER**

Bill Kragh

**ARLINGTON 500**

Kim Heuer  
Mike Paulson

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Paula Matzek

**MEMBERSHIP**

Bill Kragh  
Gary Gilbert

**EDITOR**

Paula Matzek

**SECRETARY**

Kim Heuer

**RIDE CHAIR**

Mitch Polonsky

**DESIGNER**

Brian Larson

# Meet a Member

## SRIDAR PEYYETI

### **When and how did you learn to ride a bike?**

While I did bike as a kid growing up in India, I never took it seriously nor did I do any long-distance rides until 2022. The first time I rode a bike was when I was about 6 years old on my brother's full-size bike employing a method called "half pedal" where you pedal with your one foot going under the top-tube. It ended "wonderfully" with me landing in the bushes and my siblings laughing their guts off.



### **When and why did you join AHBC?**

Thanks to Kim Heuer who convinced me to join AHBC and sent me the link for online registration within 5 minutes. My first ride with AHBC was on the following Saturday in October 2022 to Lake Zurich when I had to ask dog-walkers about which direction a group of die-hard bikers went or until Greg Konieczny or Kim Heuer found me meandering rather aimlessly the neighborhoods off of Cuba Road. I joined AHBC because Dr. Andrew Krock (my physician) suggested it and gave me a swig of "biking Kool-aid." He told me what bike to buy, where to buy, and the club I should join, namely AHBC.

### **What paced group do you usually ride with?**

Most of my rides have been with the "Advanced Intermediate" group. Thanks to Greg Konieczny for leading most of them, Mitch Polonsky for always being there and caring for me when I fell behind, Carl Pirok for his end-of-ride encouragement, Peter Schmelzer for advising me on maintaining 80-90 cadence, Bill Kragh for the interesting conversation, humor, and introducing me to Ignaz Schwinn, Mike Paulson for inspiring me to reach a higher level of biking performance and letting me steal his routes from RWGPS, Jack Lichtenauer for exchanging techno-science pleasantries during rides, Dr. Andrew Krock for checking my vital-stats in real-time and doing "physicals" while riding on Otis Road with its quadruple killer 3-4 degree gradients, Bill McKinley for stimulating me to learn and perfect the "art of replacing tire tube" in under 20 minutes, Mick Fitton for riding far ahead but still waiting at the midway eateries or at the end of the ride, Paula Matzek for being a diehard, full-spectrum, all-levels cheerleader, etc.

### **What bike(s) do you currently own?**

I currently own/ride a Trek Domane SL5, 3rd generation, aka Blackbird SR-71. Thanks to Gene Zaworski for helping me get this bike within 3 weeks during the bleak (post) COVID-19 days of bike shortage.

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**What is your favorite lunch stop on club rides?**

Whatever Greg Konieczny chooses is good with me as he has good taste and he makes sure the lunch stop has vegetarian stuff. My favorite is Bella's Short Stack, as the longer ride is challenging, Fox River Trail is enchanting, the patrons/staff are friendly, jovial and encouraging of bikers with hard-heads and a ton of electronic gadgets (that beep all the time...wonder whose?)

**Do you ride year-round?**

Never did year-round biking in the past; this will be my first year. Thanks to Bill Kragh and Mitch Polonsky for putting together the January 1, 2024 ride. Though the ride was relatively short (~20 miles), the stopover at Mitch's home, with fresh-baked bread and cookies from Beth's oven, was most inviting...to the extent that Mike Paulson and I stayed back for almost 2 hours. Q1 2024 was good enough for me with about 650 miles. So, I guess it is a good start for year-round biking

**What was your favorite ride or cycling event last season?**

My favorite ride was the one to Fort Sheridan with Mitch Polonsky. Got to imbibe the beauty of Lake Michigan from the high hilltop, get to know Mitch and learn about his family, his achievements, his adventures doing the Chicago triathlon, easing myself in the wonderful, fancy, and heated restrooms in Lake Forest, trusting Mitch and blindly following his 1-1 lead through narrow paths between people's multi-million-dollar houses, etc.

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

Longest measured ride was 60 (4 x 15) miles during 2023 "Bike the Drive" event on Michigan Avenue. However, my longest up-down ride was to Hampshire, Illinois (56 miles at average moving speed of 13.7 mph.)

**Did you volunteer last year at the Arlington 500, and, if so, what was your job?**

No, as I did not know about AHBC nor Arlington 500 last year.

**What are your favorite non-cycling activities?**

DIY-challenges (I built my deck from first principles during COVID-19 days) and taking my little, impish MinPin pooch – Qiskit – on long walks ... as soon as I get back from an exhausting 40+ mile ride with Greg Konieczny and company.

**Is there anything else you want to share with us?**

I would like to express my gratitude to many members of AHBC who made me feel welcome, challenged me to become a better biker, shared many useful biking tips, were there with me when I fell behind, and hosted a wonderful year-end banquet that my wife, Sitara, attended and enjoyed and where vegetarian food was served. And of course, I cannot forget Mr. Treasurer coming by my table at the very end -- after the sumptuous dinner with friends-- and politely reminding me that I had not yet paid for my wife's dinner. Guess there are no free rides with AHBC .

# Bike Safety Tips

## AHBC MEMBERSHIP

Don't assume that the cyclist in front of you is following safe cycling practices at any given moment. *Gary Gilbert*

You are responsible for your own safety, no one else is. *Don Sortor*

Never overlap wheels with the bike ahead. *Larry Boze*

Do not ride more than two abreast. Do not block vehicle traffic. *Mitch Polonsky*

Useful on busy trails: When overtaking another trail user, announce your passing (left or right) with plenty of time for the recipient to react. *Ralph Banasiak*

Only pass on the left, never on the right. *Donna Ponte*

Always call out "on your left" when passing another biker. *Debbie Watson*

Pass the "all aboard" message forward through the group after everyone has passed through an intersection. It is very difficult for the leader to hear if only one person is yelling. *Debbie Watson*

When riding in a group, check around you before slowing down or passing, and announce your intention. *Sandra Basile*

At stoplights, do not bunch up next to waiting vehicles. Wait behind the vehicles. *Tom Drabant*

Wear high-visibility everything – helmet, clothing, flashing lights. *Cindy Trent*

If you need to look back over your shoulder, put one hand near the stem and the other on the back of your saddle. It will keep you from drifting. *Frank Bing* (with credit to Marianne Kron)

When drinking from a water bottle while in motion, use the left hand to grab the bottle. Using the left hand allows you to keep your right hand on the right brake lever that operates the back brake while you are in motion. If you are rolling while drinking and have to brake quickly, squeezing the front brake may cause an "endo" – tumbling over the front end of the bike. *Pete Schmelzer*

Make eye contact with drivers at an intersection to be sure that they see you before proceeding. *Vic LaMantia*

Get more people biking by advocating for physically separated bike infrastructure. Research has continually shown that physical separation ensures safety, which also gets more people biking, which in turn makes drivers more attentive and creates safer conditions for all. It's a positive feedback loop! *Brian Larson*

# Little Free Library Ride

## BILL KRAGH

For the spring of 2024 AHBC has a new collaboration with the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. Four presentations/activities will promote bicycling and AHBC The March presentation dealt with ideas for places to ride, April's with types of bikes and things to bring on a ride, and May's how to ride safely. As of this writing, the first two presentations have been well attended by the public.

The plan for the fourth collaboration on June 20 is to combine riding and reading into an actual bike ride. What better way to do this than with a ride to nearby Little Free Libraries, giving riders a chance to exercise their bodies and, later, to exercise their brains through the new books they acquire? The event will be a one hour five-mile ride to three or four little libraries. The ride will start and end at the library parking lot, where the library staff will cordon off part of the parking lot as a place where riders can gather and register. The library will also provide books from Friends of the Library that can be left or exchanged at the Little Free Libraries. In addition, AHBC has been awarded a \$150 stipend by Active Transportation Alliance in recognition of our club's sponsoring this community event for Bike Month.

AHBC is planning six different five-mile routes. A group of ten to fifteen riders will be sent on each route with an AHBC ride leader and sweep. If you would like to participate in this collaboration as a ride leader or sweep or as an AHBC ambassador at the start location, please contact Bill Kragh at [bill.kragh@gmail.com](mailto:bill.kragh@gmail.com) or 847-910-8093.



# Can You Dig It? New Projects in Arlington Heights and Nearby

**BRIAN LARSON**

With spring upon us, construction is also blooming. This year will see some new biking amenities built around the area, along with plans to add more in the coming years.

## **Wilke Road Will Be a Multi-Use Path**

Say goodbye to navigating around hospital traffic and hello to a straight shot to Busse Woods! Arlington Heights is building a multi-use path along Wilke Road south of Euclid. This will eliminate the Central Road hairpin turn at Northwest Community Health and connect to the Euclid Road sidepath and the Campbell and White Oak Road bike routes. Construction is currently ongoing and expected to be finished this fall.

## **Windsor Road is Dieting to Fit New Bike Lanes!**

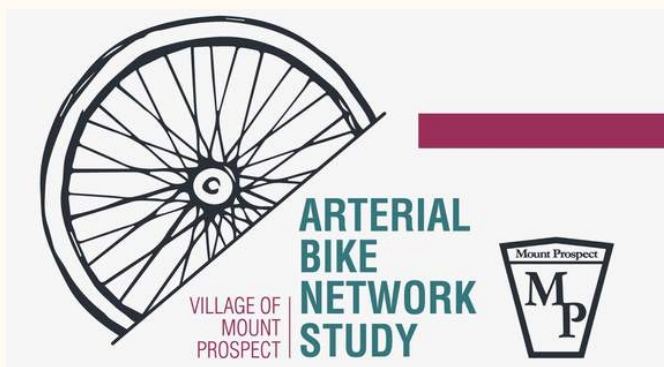
Fewer driver and pedestrian conflict points with cyclists –that’s the plan under the Windsor Road road diet, currently in the planning phase. Dedicated bike lanes will be built, meaning no more sharing space with strollers on the sidewalk to Lake Arlington, and enhanced sightlines, meaning fewer surprise drivers pulling out in front of you. Construction is expected from 2026–2027.

## **Longer, Safer Bike Routes with Mount Prospect’s Arterial Bike Network Study**

Mount Prospect wants to build a complete bicycle network across the Village. As its first step to do so, it kicked off its Arterial Bike Network Study this spring to identify which major streets should get bike paths. Plans are to build separated pathways to ensure the highest safety and comfort level for riders of all abilities. Mount Prospect is currently determining alternatives and will host an open house soon.

## **Mount Prospect Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program**

“Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will not themselves be realized.” Mount Prospect is moving fast to make a safer community for biking and walking with its revision to the Village’s current traffic calming program. Mount Prospect seeks to lower driver speeds and make more residential streets eligible for calming projects, while focusing efforts on engineering solutions that force drivers to pay more attention to the road.



*Daily Herald*



# Bike Safety Quiz

REBECCA FRANK

How knowledgeable are you about safe riding? Put yourself to the test with the following sample of questions tailored for road cyclists in Illinois.

**1. When riding on the road in Illinois, what is the minimum distance you should maintain between yourself and parked cars to avoid the risk of being "doored"?**

- a) 1 foot
- b) 3 feet
- c) 5 feet
- d) 7 feet

**2. True or False: In Illinois, cyclists are legally required to use hand signals when turning or stopping.**

**3. When riding at night in Illinois, which of the following is required by law?**

- a) Front and rear lights
- b) Rear reflector only
- c) Front light only
- d) No lighting or reflectors required

**4. In Illinois, if a road has a designated bicycle lane, where should cyclists typically ride?**

- a) Anywhere within the lane
- b) As close to the center line as possible
- c) Next to parked cars
- d) Close to the right-hand edge of the bike lane

**5. In Illinois, when riding on the road, how many cyclists are allowed to ride side by side?**

- a) No more than one cyclist (single file)
- b) No more than two cyclists side by side
- c) As many as can fit comfortably
- d) There are no restrictions on riding side by side

(Answers: 1. b; 2. T; 3. a; 4. d; 5. b)



# A Discount

## **BILL KRAGH**

About a year ago I was happy to purchase a used carbon fiber Pinarello. The bike had been well cared for and was the right size for me. It has been a great match and fun to ride. When I bought the bike, I noted the tires were usable for probably another 500 miles before needing replacement. Well, the nice fall and almost snowless winter significantly increased the riding season and decreased the bike overhaul season. So, after 1400 miles on the old tire, disaster finally struck. My tire sprung a slow leak at the furthest point from home while my wife was out of town. So no chance of dialing 1-800-Anne for rescue. With a few co2 cartridges and timely inflations I nursed the tire to a mile from home before having to walk. I was grateful to walk only a mile, not 12.

With the bike in the stand at home I removed the rear wheel with intent to replace the tire and tube. As I removed the tire, small pieces of paper begin to fall from the tire onto my work area. With the tire completely off, I was surprised to find a dollar bill in the tire. We've all heard about this quick trick to patch a hole in a tire to get you home. Imagine my surprise to find out I had gotten 1400 miles on a buck. And who knows how many miles the prior owner had gotten. So never underestimate the strength of the dollar!



## THE WORST BIKE RIDE, CONTINUED

The forecast was for cool morning temperatures, so I would dress in layers. Overcast but no rain – perfect! I was ready for a very good day on the bike!

I awoke to an unusually thick fog and only 39 degrees, but the fog covering my house cleared enough for safe riding, so my start was only delayed one hour. Just 10 miles into the ride, the thick fog returned and I could barely see stop lights. Moisture was dripping off my helmet into my eyes, and my clothes and shoes were soaked through even though it was not raining. I was riding in a cloud and clouds are made of water.

Arriving in Paul Douglas Forest Preserve, I felt safer with no car traffic, but the fog was menacing. As a walker approached I slowed and asked “could you see me coming at you?” He replied, “Only about 20 yards ahead.” I considered abandoning but persisted, and the fog did burn off about 20 miles into the ride. “OK, I’m drying out, the sky has cleared, and I’m almost back on pace.”

Riding with renewed optimism, a few miles onto the scenic Fox River Trail my back tire went flat. When this happens on the Club’s group rides, there are always several experienced people who pitch in for a quick fix and we are quickly on our way – not today! “I can do this on my own,” I thought. Two courteous cyclists stopped to offer help, but my pride got in the way and I declined. “Now I have to do this on my own!”

I removed the wheel from the bike, removed the tire from the wheel, rubbed my thumb through the inside of the tire, and quickly but painfully found the guilty glass shard. The new tube went back into the tire and both were attached to the wheel, but putting the back wheel back on the bike by myself took about 25 minutes. Now I just had to refill the tire and I’d be on my way.

When I attached the CO2 valve to the CO2 canister, the valve was already open so the CO2 escaped before I was able to attach it to the valve on the tube. Good thing I carry two canisters. I closed the CO2 valve, attached it to the second canister, attached it to the tube valve, but the tube valve was now bent and the CO2 escaped once again.

By that time, the two cyclists were already on the back side of their out-and-back ride, so I sheepishly yet gladly accepted their second offer to assist. Because my spare tube valve was defective, one guy gave me his own spare tube and he used his hand pump to give me enough air to get rolling again. I had two \$20 bills so I gave him one of them with my sincere appreciation.

I knew there was a bike shop about four miles ahead where I could fill the tube completely. The shop was closed. I continued to the house where the inspection was taking place. When I arrived, I read a text message from my son-in-law, explaining the inspection ended early when they found the furnace vents were not connected and the house was full of mold, among other issues.

[KEEP READING](#)

## THE WORST BIKE RIDE, CONTINUED

By now, I figured that the solo century was not going to happen, so I needed to get to a gas station, fill the tire, enjoy the ride back home, and call it a day at 40 miles.

The pump at the gas station had a maximum inflation of 35 psi – it was for cars only. The attendant told me to try the gas station a mile further up the road. Same pump. But this attendant told me to go around behind the station to where the trucks use a different pump for their tires. It was the right pump, but only had a Schrader valve and I had a Presta valve on my tube.

That's it! I'm done! No more mishaps! I notified my wife/SAG driver and planned to meet her at a Burger King restaurant that I could ride to and she could easily find. Knowing it would take an hour for her to get to me and realizing I had not been in a Burger King for more than 10 years, I decided that I deserved a Whopper with cheese for all my troubles. After two bites, I remembered why I had not been in a Burger King for more than 10 years – nasty!

During the car ride home, I felt somewhat humiliated and embarrassed by all the mayhem. I showered, ate real food, and my level of frustration dispersed like CO<sub>2</sub> from a faulty canister valve. I could not leave my bike in that compromised condition, so I changed the back tire again, filling the tube with air from my bike pump, which has the correct valve for my tube. Feeling the need to do something productive, I even cleaned and lubed the chain.

For the record, three weeks later I completed the full solo century ride as originally planned and without any mishaps. It was a very good day on the bike!



## ARLINGTON 500 UPDATE, CONTINUED

There seems to be a lot of interest among the cycling community for the 500 this year. Pre-registration via Bike Reg has been solid, with more early registrants to date than the past two years combined.

Our new venue, Lake Zurich High School, has been secured with the acceptance of our Certificate of Insurance. A meeting with the Vice Principal is scheduled for April 29 to discuss parking and use of indoor and outdoor space.

We will again have a hub and spoke event with a single rest stop area. The routes, which have been pre-ridden by a variety of club members, are a compilation of AHBC favorites distilled into five loops equaling up to 100.7 miles for our riders' enjoyment. The routes will be finalized about two weeks before the event, with route marking and a pre-ride for all AHBC members on Saturday, June 1.

AHBC members have already begun signing up to help, but the rosters are not yet filled! Food Preparation Crew has one spot remaining, with Registration, Logistics, Route Marking, Rest Stop and SAG needing more volunteers. Volunteer sheets will be available at meetings and on the club website, [cyclearlington.com](http://cyclearlington.com). To access the online volunteer sheet, log in as a member. Under the Member tab, "Volunteer for 500" and "Community Bike Ride/Volunteer for 2024 Arlington 500" will open the Excel form for volunteers. Excel can be a little dicey at times, so, for certainty, highlight another cell to ensure your name is stored before closing the form. If you need help signing up, contact Mike.

We are expecting good rider attendance and hoping for good weather, and we know that our club members will step up to ensure that the this year's Arlington 500 remains a world-class invitational. Thank you to all who will participate in the planning, preparation, and event-day tasks of the 2024 Arlington 500!

### Ride with us today

#### **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.

**[JOIN THE FUN!](#)**

@ahbccyclists | [info@cyclearlington.com](mailto:info@cyclearlington.com)

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