

Arlington Heights Bicycle Association

The



Nov.-Dec. 1995

SP KEN WORD

BILLS BIKE RIDE DREAMIN

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Coming out of the alpine lodge, sun streams through the crisp clear mountain air. Easing onto the road in a low gear, you begin the three mile gentle climb to the 11,000' summit. You gaze at the constantly changing vistas of the mountain peaks as you silently glide by. The lush alpine valley is alive with babbling creeks filled with the melting run off from the nearby snow capped peaks. The sun sparkles on the snow as it dances down the mountain side to meet you. After a half hour of medium effort you arrive at the summit and the four of you regroup and celebrate each member's arrival. After taking pictures, you absorb the magnificent valley views and enjoy the serenity of the moment.

Now the fun starts, its five thousand vertical feet down to the town at the end of today's ride. Beginning to roll the group gathers momentum, as it enters the magnificent valleys viewed from the summit. Tucking and drafting each others slipstream, the group uses gravity to change positions and talk about the sights and the exhilaration of the downhill ride. A river joins alongside the road, growing as you descend and the lush alpine meadows give way to rocky canyon walls. A sign lets you know you're on an Indian reservation. The windswept but painted river canyon walls now surround you. Luck is with you as a tailwind helps the group continue its gentle descent through the canyon beside the river.

Lunch is at an authentic Indian diner with questions from reservation members. The afternoon ride is a flat 25 mile ride across the plains to the evening stop, an old mining town.

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As the snow falls, we all need to do a little dreaming about the sport we love as we begin a new club year. Hopefully, this will be a special year for the club as members past and present celebrate the club's twenty-fifth anniversary next August.

As we begin, I would like to take a moment and thank last years club leaders who are retiring from their positions. **Hans Predal, Dottie Tockey and Rene' Schreiner** have all contributed their efforts to keeping the club alive and well this past year. **Hans Predal** has actively served the club as president for the last two years providing faithful leadership on numerous issues. **Hans** also lead the effort to restart the Arlington 500 and has provided several ideas for the 25th anniversary celebration next August. **Dottie** as editor of the newsletter for the last few years, has done a great job in following up with people to get their articles and then compose the layout of the newsletter and get it to the printer. **Rene'** has helped Roy with meeting programs.

A big thank you (applause) for your contributions.

For those people continuing in their positions **Chris & Dave Van Dornick** (Co-Vice Presidents), **Mary Fitzwater** (Secretary), **Al & Jeanie Gain** (Bike Swap), **Greg Konieczny** (Arlington 500), **Roy Euclide** (Program), **Cecily Rood** (Membership), **Jim Shoemaker** (Newsletter Mailing) and **Marilyn Wilkerson** (Refreshments) thank you for your efforts last year and thank you for volunteering for another year.

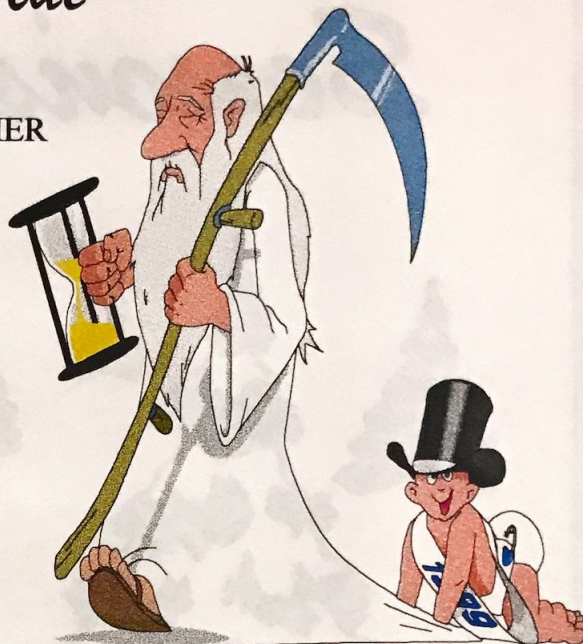
Finally, welcome to those people who have volunteered to step forward and offer their time and talents in this upcoming year. **Ron McPheron** is our new treasurer and **Barb Swasas** is our new newsletter editor.

I hope to see you all out for the New Year's Day ride starting at 10:30a.m. from my house. In the meantime I hope you enjoy the holidays and get all the biking gifts you want.

Annual New Year's Day Ride

STARTS: 10:30 A.M. JANUARY 1, 1996
5-10 MILES DEPENDING ON WEATHER

BILL KRAGH'S
505 E. ST. JAMES
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
(2 blocks North of Recreation Park
on Haddow)



Top 10 Ways to Improve the Arlington Heights Bicycle Association (By Paula Matzek)

10. Rig the drinking fountain at Recreation Park to shoot water like the one on the way home from Brookfield Zoo.
9. Award bonus miles for wind, hills, or rain on a ride.
8. NEW RULE: Flat tires may be changed only in front of ice cream shops.
7. Rollback Chris Van Dornick's mileage to zero every time she hits another thousand.
6. NEW RULE: Ride leader buys lunch for everyone on the ride.
5. Hoop up the Burleys and hit the garage sales.
4. Supply Sag wagons on all rides to Batavia.
3. Make sure we stop at cleaner swimming holes.
2. Get David Letterman to emcee next year's banquet.
1. Next Year: **TWO** times around the Milwaukee route!!

Show-n-go rides of 30-45 miles, providing the pavement is relatively dry and the temperature is at 32 degrees or above will continue through mid-March of 1996 when the regular ride schedule will begin. Mileage accumulated from the beginning of November will count to the 1996 total.

Call Dave & Chris VanDornick for more information at 259-7917.

Tuesday night rides will begin on the first Tuesday in April 1996.

Season's Greetings



President:	Bill Kragh	255-2814
Co-Vice Presidents:	Dave Van Dornick	259-7917
	Chris Van Dornick	259-7917
Secretary:	Mary Fitzwater	394-4999
Treasurer:	Ron McPheron	824-5091
Membership:	Cecily Rood	398-7448
Newsletter Editor:	Barb Swasas	459-8065
Newsletter Mailing:	Jim Shoemaker	259-1692
Bike Swap:	Al Gain	392-1547
	Jeanie Gaina	392-1547
Refreshments:	Marilyn Wilkerson	439-4496
Arlington 500:	Greg Konieczny	398-4633
Program:	Roy Euclide	437-0442
	Rene' Schreiner	215-7626

For any members that remember Nora Plichta who has been a member for some time, she has moved to Arizona. You can contact her at:

2702 Leisure World
Mesa, Arizona 85206

Use your head

Hundreds of kids die each year because they don't want to wear bike helmets

By LISA FRIEDMAN MINER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

A 4-inch scar above his left ear is the only physical reminder of the fall Mike D'Angelo took three years ago last month. Kids sometimes ask about the scar; few believe the lanky 15-year-old when he stops to explain.

Mike was riding his bike in front of his home in West Dundee. His foot slipped, he fell and his head hit pavement.

This simple bike accident, just steps away from his own driveway, nearly cost Mike D'Angelo his life. Three years later, he barely remembers that day at all.

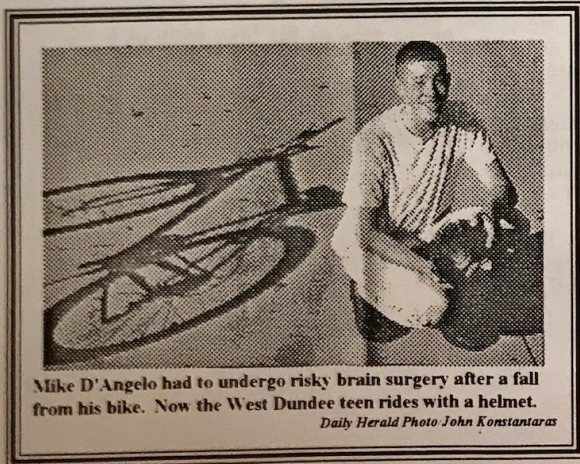
The fall caused bleeding in his brain. The pain was so severe that they had to keep pillows over Mike's face to block out light. Within hours, he was rushed by helicopter from Sherman Hospital in Elgin to Loyola Medical Center, where he underwent risky brain surgery to relieve the pressure.

Doctors spoke frankly. Mike, then just 12, could have severe brain damage. He could lose the ability to remember or even to speak. He could suffer behavioral changes. Or he could die.

"They really prepared us for the worst," his mom, Danette D'Angelo, recalls. "He could come away not being Mike anymore. It was not an easy thing."

Making it all the more painful was the fact that the head injury could have been prevented — if Mike had been wearing a helmet.

Instead, Mike spent eight days in the hospital. He lost four months of school. He was plagued with headaches and fatigue for more than half a year. His medical bills totaled \$75,000.



Mike D'Angelo had to undergo risky brain surgery after a fall from his bike. Now the West Dundee teen rides with a helmet.

Daily Herald Photo John Konstantaras

Yet, Mike — now a sophomore at St. Edward's High School in Elgin — was lucky. The side effects were temporary. And he learned an important lesson, one he shares with other kids every chance he gets.

"Football players wear helmets to protect them," he tells his peers. "It would be cool for you to wear a helmet, too, on your bike to keep you safe."

His garage is filled with bike helmets — enough for Mike, his two brothers and any friends who dare show up without one.

"We just weren't educated. We were really ignorant," Danette says, explaining why Mike rode without a helmet. "Unfortunately, we had to learn the hard way."

Understanding the impact

Dr. Anthony Delach preaches helmets to all of his young patients. He talks to their parents as well. But Delach — who chairs the American Academy of Pediatrics' Illinois committee on injury and poison prevention — is frustrated because his efforts seem to do little good.

"If you wear a helmet," he says, "80 percent of the time your head will come out unscathed."

To prove his point, Delach performs helmet demonstrations at bike safety rodeos. First, he places a melon inside a bike helmet and drops it from 10 feet. The melon survives the fall.

Then, he unbuckles the helmet and lets the melon drop unprotected. Later, they wash the shattered remains from the floor.

"The brain can take only so much impact," Delach explains.

In fact, even a mild blow to the head can cause lasting damage, says Dr. James Kelly, who is in charge of the brain injury program at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

"The brain rotates inside the head in such a way that it tears inside the brain itself," Kelly says.

And that tear starts a chain reaction in the brain that can cause a loss of balance, dizziness, sleep problems, headaches and nausea.

"Their memories are problems forever," Kelly says of some of his patients. "Sometimes their language is affected and they can't find words they used to know."

They are the lucky ones.

Statistics vary, but by some accounts 400 children age 14 and younger die each year in bike accidents, most from head trauma. Others can lie in comas for weeks. When they wake, some need 24-hour care for the rest of their lives.

"They're forever devastated," Kelly says. "Some are never able to do anything for themselves."

Yet, people still think bike accidents mean little more than scraped knees and sprained ankles. They don't understand how important it is to protect their heads, Kelly says.

"The best treatment that there is for brain injury is prevention. It sounds corny, but it's true," Kelly says. "It's very hard, once damage has occurred, to undo what's already been done."

'You stick out'

Prevention is a top goal of pediatricians and safety educators. But getting children to wear helmets is a

tough battle.

Peer pressure is the biggest problem. Though today's helmets come in a wide range of styles and colors, children — especially in the middle and upper grades — often catch flak for wearing them.

Even Mike D'Angelo gets teased when he rides with his helmet.

"If you're wearing some dorky helmet," he says, "you stick out."

Parents are reluctant to force the issue. Many argue that years ago, when today's moms and dads were kids, no one wore a helmet. And you didn't hear much about head trauma back then.

The argument doesn't sit well with Teri Crawley, coordinator of the Chicagoland Safe Kids Campaign.

"We didn't have smoke detectors as kids. And we didn't wear seat belts," she says. "That doesn't mean it was a smart decision."

Mark Rosenberg, a Barrington pediatrician and D'Angelo's doctor, agrees.

"It's a more dangerous world than it was 30 years ago," he says. "Cars are moving faster. They're not paying as much attention."

Today's helmets are also better, experts say. Many are lightweight and comfortable. And cost, once an argument against helmets, can be as little as \$10 or \$20.

Delach advises parents to make helmets mandatory for their children. And compliance, adds Crawley, needs to start the first time a toddler climbs aboard a tricycle.

"What I do with my kids," Delach says, "is they wear their helmets or their bike gets locked up for two weeks."

Helmet laws

Even if a parent insists on helmets, that doesn't mean they're going to get full compliance. An older child, for example, can shed his helmet once out of Mom's view.

That's why advocates say the battle for helmets needs to move beyond the bike paths and into the legislatures.

Thirteen states have laws relating to helmet use and children. Illinois is not one of them.

Legislation works, supporters say. In New Jersey, for example, where children under 14 are required to wear helmets, helmet use has soared to about 60 percent.

Efforts closer to home have failed. Buffalo Grove trustees considered making their town the first in Illinois to mandate bike helmets, but the idea was voted down. A similar proposal is now under discussion in Barrington.

Where officials say regulation has worked is in Buffalo Grove-Long Grove Elementary District 96. The Lake County district enacted strict rules last year about wearing helmets on school property after one boy was badly injured in a bike accident.

Ivy Hall Middle School principal John Mason says compliance at his school and the three elementary schools in the District 96 is about 90 percent; compliance at the junior high level is somewhat less. Students who continue to ignore the rule can be banned from riding on school property.

Mason says the rule takes away the peer pressure. In the past, he'd hear kids with helmets labeled as "nerds."

"It doesn't happen any more," Mason says. "Once you reach a certain percentage of compliance, you get rid of the stigma."

But when the town of Buffalo Grove surveyed residents about taking the rule village-wide, many parents wrote in that they didn't want government officials meddling in what they considered a family issue, Village President Sidney Mathias says.

"At some point," he says, "I think families should take some responsibility, and government should not have to always interfere with family life."

Mathias also says enforcement could be a problem. What would you do, for example, if a child from neighboring Wheeling pedaled over the border bare-headed? And wouldn't you traumatize kids, he asks, if police were stopping them for failing to wear a helmet?

Some advocates acknowledge the problems. But they say statewide legislation would help.

"We legislate a lot of things in people's lives," says Crawley, of the Safe Kids Campaign. "We've legislated smoke detectors. We've legislated car seats and seat belts. I think bicycle helmets are a logical next step."

A costly issue

Whatever the approach, avoiding helmets has a hefty price tag. According to the Safe Kids Campaign, every \$15 helmet saves this country \$30 in direct health-care costs and \$365 in other costs.

Crawley says preventable injuries among children — including bike accidents — cost this country \$13 billion a year.

"Our resources are dwindling," Crawley says. "Our health-care costs are increasing. And the only way to change that is to do the prevention."

Mike D'Angelo agrees. Three years ago, just a few weeks out of the hospital, he visited with 300 children from his Sleepy Hollow elementary school. He showed them the stitches across his shaved head. He told them about the pain.

"I was very worried. Sometimes I thought I was going to die," Mike recalls. "It really shocked me when they said I was going to have brain surgery."

Even now, doctors warn Mike not to participate in contact sports. Baseball's out too, since he risks being hit with a ball. If he runs a finger across the left side of his head, he can feel where the skull is separated.

So Mike lobbies for state and local helmet laws. He also spreads the word among school groups whenever he's asked. And he never gets on his bike without a helmet.

"I thought it couldn't happen to me," he says. "I just don't want it to happen to anybody else."

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR ARLINGTON HEIGHTS BICYCLE ASSOCIATION

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

City/Zip _____ Phone _____

In signing this release for myself, and/or a named participant under the age of 18, I understand that the Arlington Heights Bicycle Association officers and members, are not insurers of any participant's personal safety during any activity of the Arlington Heights Bicycle Association. For myself and/or said minor, my (and minor's) heirs and assignees, I hereby waive all claims for, forever discharge, and agree to save harmless the Arlington Heights Bicycle Association officers and members from any and all liability from having sustained personal injuries or property damage by reason of their negligence in furthering the activities of the Arlington Heights Bicycle Association.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Single _____ (\$6) Family Members Under 18 _____ Age _____
(Must be 18 yrs. or older)

Family _____ (\$8) _____

Interested In:

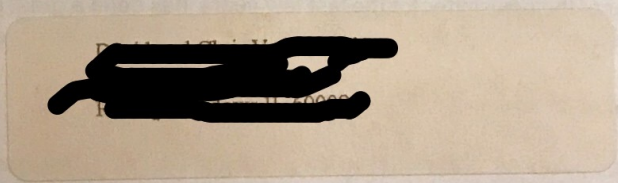
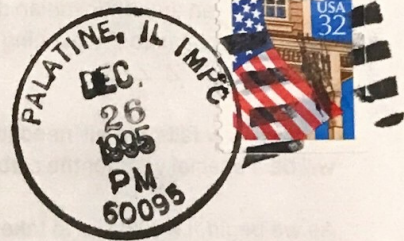
Rides _____ 10-25 Miles _____ 25-50 Miles _____ 50-100 Miles
_____ Weekend Tours _____ Camping _____ Motels

Make check payable to: Arlington Heights Bicycle Association

Mail to: Cecily Rood
505 Kingsbury Dr.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004



500 E. Miner Street
Arlington Heights, IL 60004



November-December