Wandering Wheels Newsletter, December 2016

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**AFTER 50+ YEARS..."MORE THAN WORTH IT!"

During our 52-year history, Wheels has completed 68 Coast to Coasts, having escorted over 3,500 riders across America. The notes of gratitude from the veteran riders make the over half-century of program, with all its risks taken, challenges met, and goals of accomplishment, "More than worth it!"

A highlight of the 2016 Wheels' year was the "FIFTY-YEAR REUNION of the 1966 Coast to Coasters. Nelson Rediger spearheaded the get together. Seventeen of the 37-member team gathered. Great stories. They all had bragging rights concerning their kids and grand kids. Team members brought bikes and we rode 11 miles together, nothing compared to the hundreds of miles of 1966 Kansas headwinds!

Larry Witte was a member of the 1966 maiden voyage. He left us with a DVD chronicling the "66" crossing. The following pictures tell the story of our first crossing:

- Snow angels in June!
- Five hundred miles of Kansas winds.
- Pretty desperate for water!
- Sleep when and where you can.
- Last obstacle before the Atlantic Ocean.
- At last, rest!

Always enough energy for exploration.

Witte with his baby skunk.

"All you could eat" chicken! Friend footed the bill! Like a "food drunk," had to sleep it off!

Carried water from the Pacific Ocean and poured it into the Atlantic Ocean.

Two to three programs per week, including an audience with President Truman.

Singing "America the Beautiful!"
FLORIDA 2016


Bill and Anita... "I don't ever want to grow up!"

We still use churches as our main source of lodging. Over the years the churches have been a real complement to our emphasizing things sacred.

Celebrating Mardi Gras!

BIKE PATHS TOUR

We researched several bike path options in Indiana and Ohio. We did a bus run to the Wilbur Wright Museum in Hagerstown, Indiana. Heavy rain pushed us into a movie theater in Muncie, Indiana, and then a bus ride back to Wheels. We started riding the bike paths north out of Kokomo, Indiana, to South Bend, Indiana. Larry Stewart gave us a tour of the Notre Dame campus, then on to Shipshewana, Indiana (Amish Country). The next day we bused to Urbana, Ohio, and cycled the bike path to Xenia, Ohio. We cycled the bike path from Middletown, Ohio, to Huber Heights, then to Piqua, Ohio. Next to last day of riding we bused to Indianapolis, hooked up with the Monon Trail, "did Indy", then bused home to Upland. We wound up Bike Path Tour by riding 26 miles to Sweetser, Indiana, and back to Upland.

The bike paths give feeling of safety, but they eliminate some of the romance of the open road!

TRAILBLAZER RIDE

The Cardinal Greenway Bike Path, (Muncie, Indiana, to Losantville, Indiana) is a wonderful training ground for introducing families to cycling. We've been doing this ride for several years. Many of the kids started riding the trail on BMX-size bikes and have advanced to full size bikes.

The ride isn't just about biking. We picnic along the way, have an ice cream get-together at a local store, play on an assortment of Wheels' trick bikes and wind up the first day with a world class kick ball game. Sunday we have church, a hot dog lunch, and return to starting point.

FALL BREAKAWAY

The quote on the team shirt for 2016 was, "Anywhere is a wonderful place when we are all together," says Pooh. Laughter was the dominate sound during the seven-day, 200-mile tour.

The theme of the ride was "Zoo Animals". We visited two zoos and left each rider with a philosophical booklet, "Furry Logic". Some quotes from "Furry Logic":

"Life is short: have another piece of chocolate.

'One of my clever ways of fighting back against the world is by boldly going to bed.'
Former Wheels' riders served as hosts on two occasions. Pat and Judy Cole did a super job in Albion, Indiana. Jeff Kepler coordinated for us in Ossian, Indiana.

When people inquire about renting the Wheels' Kitchen, they stammer and stumble over what to call it. They call it the "lodge", "cabin", "building", or simply say that they want to rent Wandering Wheels! Needless to say, whatever it is called, its 35 years of ministry have had a huge impact on groups from as far away as a 100 miles.

Young families regularly host birthday parties for "kids" one year of age up to ten and older. Family reunions are another popular use of the Retreat House. Weekends are booked for church youth retreats. Girls' slumber parties are also a regular reason for retreat bookings.

The Trees Family (Kevin, Brenda, Lauren and Valerie) continue to make us look good! Scheduling and cleaning are two of their main responsibilities. They are always a step ahead in spotting areas needing repair.

Excerpt from church "thank you":
"I want to express my appreciation for providing an atmosphere where the teens could interact and make some great memories, while also experiencing Christ in an impactful way! The use of your pool was something that everyone enjoyed and the interactive games made it possible for the teens who don't normally interact together to talk and share in each other's company! The fall retreat our youth group does has become a pivotal and foundational stepping stone in our youth ministry offered at our church. Thank you for providing us a place where our group can escape daily routines to find spiritual renewal!

Thanks!!! You have a great place."

Janine and Dana are our "Mr. Fix-its". They have an extended ministry helping young and old with various repair projects.

Recent visit from (Odessa)
Bob Kiser, our oldest Coast to Coaster!
Wheels’ riders that have passed in recent months:

Karl Harte -- master cabinet builder. After his retirement he spent most of his free time on his bike riding with Wheels. (45 trips!) He was always ready to help with dishes and other domestic chores. He will be really, really missed!

Tim Grier -- rode on several Coast to Coasts between 1982 and 1991

Paul Millihan -- rode on the 1973 Spring Break trip

Nancy Gore -- helped cook on six major tours 1987 thru 1990

Carl Atkinson -- a rider on Wheels’ first bicycle tour, the 1,000-mile tour in 1964

Jerry Vinyard -- rode on seven Coast to Coasts between 1983 and 1991

John Scripps -- rider on the 1991 Breakaway Coast-to-Coast

IN CLOSING....

We often look for “God sightings” in different places. After over 50 years of leading thousands of people on bike tours in the U.S. and around the world, I find God to be VERY conspicuous after the fact. When I look back, I am overwhelmed by the number of times our back was covered by the Almighty, always giving me pause for THANKS!

YOU, our Wheels’ newsletter team, have been a major source of encouragement to our 50 plus years of ministry! How much longer? We are winding down, but still feel the good spiritual reward of serving others through bikes and the Wheels’ Kitchen.

Special note from a Wheels’ friend: “I am a believer in a loving God who somehow takes care of me in spite of myself.”

Bob & Staff

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2017 TRIP SCHEDULE

FLORIDA TRIP (only one)
Cocoa Beach to Juno
Return to Cocoa Beach
13 Days (3 days longer)
JAN 19 - JAN 31

TRAILBLAZER
Gaston, IN to Losantville, IN
Return to Gaston
JUL 15 - JUL 16

33rd FALL BREAKAWAY
Biking and Fellowship - Center out of Wandering Wheels
SEP 08 - SEP 15