

# Hearty Cyclists laugh at winter



Tom Gilbert for Public Opinion

## Penn National seniors love their bicycles

**By TOM GILBERT**  
For Public Opinion

During the winter months when Mother Nature pulls up her socks in an attempt to discourage one and all from venturing outdoors there is a hearty group in Penn National who laugh derisively at her efforts.

The group is an informal collection of senior citizens who are devotees to bicycling. "Riding on cold days is not intolerable as long as you dress in layers and the wind is not howling," said Bob Ferris, the titular leader of the group. "The effort expended on those days keeps you warmer than you might think."

During the winter months their riding is mostly impromptu and local. But that doesn't mean they don't ride a lot. Most of the riders are out there several times a week at least. It is nothing for Jake Pulnar to ride from Penn National to Marion and back. If he can find some others to ride along – good. But if not he does it on his own. "It keeps my cholesterol down," he said.

And while their riding is mostly local in the winter, once a year they

do a major ride. For instance last year they did a three-day ride on the C&O Canal from Cumberland down to Georgetown. Ferris knew a few people who rode and he put the word out that they were going to do the canal ride and they ended up with seven riders and everyone had a great time.

This year they did a two-day ride on the Great Allegheny Passage Trail, a 150-mile rail-trail from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Md. They had six riders on this trip and once again it was a big success. Although when asked for his most notable memory of the trip Peter Fleury said jokingly, "The sorest butt I ever had in my life. I couldn't believe we were going to get back on those bikes the second day." It should be pointed out that Fleury is primarily a runner and doesn't ride as much as the others. But he feels that bike riding is a good way to cross-train.

Since the group is informal and loosely organized they don't make any long-range plans. But none of the riders would be surprised if next year they end up on the Pine Creek Rail Trail near Wellsboro, Pa. But

they also can hear Cayuga's waters calling to them. The Bon Ton Roulet is a scenic yet challenging seven-day 350-mile ride around the Finger Lakes. So if not next year it is always a possibility down the road.

These major trips are always done during the warm weather. And everyone in the group has a reason for challenging the elements when many might opt to stay indoors by the fire.

Tom Daley said, "I just enjoy getting out and riding around the countryside."

Don David is simply committed to riding. "Biking is my number one sport," he said. "It keeps me healthy and I really enjoy it."

Ferris has a reason for riding in the winter. "I enjoy the weather outside and I'm also trying to fight the battle of the bulge by exercising." But he also has broader take on riding. "Bike riding is something you can do well into your senior years," he said. "And it's a good way for seniors to get exercise. It is not just for young people."

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