

JohnnyRide 2010...more riders, more fun!

It looked for a time like JohnnyRide's streak of good weather was ending. The morning of Saturday, September 18, dawned cloudy and cool. Irritating droplets of rain occasionally spattered the ground. The Weather Channel showed a couple severe storm cells not very far north. Oh oh!

But our luck held. By 9 a.m., the sun had broken through, the skies had mostly cleared, and our 7th annual JohnnyRide once again was going to enjoy good fall weather. How fortunate for the 18 adults and 4 kids who mounted their bikes for the 24-mile ride that would begin and end at the rural home of Bob and Ellen Olson near Woodville, Wisconsin.

Several things were new for JohnnyRide 2010. A "new" bike painted completely blue and festooned with blue and white balloons marked the entrance to the Olson place. A new blue and white banner stretched across their front porch to welcome all to JohnnyRide 2010. By shortly after 10 a.m., when a rank of some dozen vehicles were parked near the barn (most of them sporting bike racks), those assembled were guided through warm-up stretches by Tonya Schmitt, a certified yoga instructor. This was also new.

It did not take long for the riders to begin separating themselves on the first leg of the ride. Bringing up the rear, pedaling furiously on his miniature machine, was 4-year-old Stuart Durand. He lasted about a mile. Then, JohnnyRide's venerable sag wagon master and chief photographer, Pat Keppel, loaded Stuart's bike onto his trailer and returned the tuckered out boy to the Olson house.

It was in the Olson kitchen that his mother Julie and others were organizing the picnic meal that would greet riders and guests in just a couple of hours. Under the management of Alice Keppel (who once again took charge of organizing the JohnnyRide meal), the kitchen crew was preparing to feed upwards of 50 diners with pulled pork sandwiches, baked beans, cole slaw, and the various salads and desserts that would soon begin arriving with those coming for the picnic.

Meanwhile, after a 4½ ride north into a somewhat chilly breeze, the JohnnyRiders swung east toward Glenwood City, the halfway mark of the ride. By then, two young riders had surpassed their personal bests for long bike rides. Jed Durand, 9-year-old son of Paul and Barb Durand, would keep plugging along with Ellis Durand, 7-going-on-8-year-old son of Peter and Julie Durand, until they finally gave out after 13 miles.

I hung back with these young riders, so I was unaware of what was going on ahead, but I wondered how several new JohnnyRiders were doing. Steve and Debbie Decker, who had come all the way from southern Wisconsin, were not accustomed to biking the kind of hills that make segments of JohnnyRide a challenge. (Steve and Debbie, by the way, are the parents of Dani Decker, who was awarded an early JohnnyRide scholarship and has now graduated with honors from Marquette University).

I also wondered about Anne Fick, a new rider this year. While her husband Chuck has ridden in every JohnnyRide, Anne performed sag wagon duty and usually said, "next year!" This year she was actually doing it!

I wondered about Mary Ann Pettitt from Gordon, Wisconsin, who said she had not been on a bike for decades, and paid \$50 for a bike she could ride in JohnnyRide. And about Mary Miller of Roberts, Wisconsin, who also had not done much "training." And about Mike and Dee Ann Mclellan from Spooner, Wisconsin, both of them new to JohnnyRide. I was not concerned about Cindy Skack, from Chanhassen, Minnesota. A long-time donor to JohnnyRide, Cindy showed up

to ride for the first time looking as if it would not be much of a challenge. All told, we had eight new adult riders for JR 2010.

By the time Patricia Durand and her son Paul wheeled up to the picnic, the last riders to come in, a goodly crowd was enjoying the picnic meal. The breeze was brisk, but the sun was warming for the outdoors eaters. Regarding the scene, I sensed a feeling of satisfaction and camaraderie among the JohnnyRiders. They had done something significant, not only for scholarship, but for themselves. I doubt if anyone felt a greater sense of satisfaction (or greater relief to be done) than Ellen Olson, who completed the ride despite having broken her little toe just days before.

After enjoying the picnic meal and a period of visiting, the next event was the raffle for prizes donated by JohnnyRide supporters. As usual, there was much anticipation about who would win the autographed football provided by the Green Bay Packers, the sixth such football provided by that organization. Now, of course, the football bears the prized signature of Aaron Rogers rather than Bret Favre. But there was excitement about the other prizes also, because who doesn't want to win something, no matter what?

Before the raffle tickets were drawn, the final donations had to be tallied and entered into the raffle "system." Each dollar donated to JohnnyRide 2010 earned a raffle ticket. When the drawing began, the winning numbers were pulled from a container that held more than 2,800 tickets.

(Other donations have come in since the ride, so the total for donations to JohnnyRide 2010 to date is now over \$3,100. If you intended to donate but have not yet sent in your donation, please do.)

The prizes and winners for the 2010 JohnnyRide raffle were:

1. A one-night stay at the Ramada Plaza in Minneapolis and a \$25 credit in its Northern Point Restaurant and Lounge...Bonnie Mackesey of Madison, Wisconsin.
2. Three bottles of wine from the Famiglia Meschini winery of Argentina...Steve and Debbie Decker of Delavan, Wisconsin.
3. *New York Times* bestseller, *Awkward Family Photos*...Audrey Moore, Yorktown, Virginia.
4. A one-night stay at the Ramada of Wisconsin Dells...Chuck and Anne Fick of Plainview, Minnesota
5. *Packin' It in Wisconsin*, an easy-to-read, humorous guide to what makes Wisconsin unique...Jim Barton and Gaye Dawe of DeBerry, Texas.
6. Basketful of chocolate goodies...Jean Batté of La Vergne, Tennessee.
7. A one-night stay at the Ramada of Wisconsin Dells...Janice Durand of Madison, Wisconsin
8. Shi Wan lighted, indoor fountain...Shirley Muller of Spooner, Wisconsin.
9. A one-night stay at the Ramada Plaza in Minneapolis and a \$25 credit in its Northern Point Restaurant and Lounge...Mike and Marilyn Durand of Burnsville, Minnesota.
10. Green Bay Packers autographed football...Rod and Joyce Ripley of Spooner, Wisconsin.
11. Garden basket of fresh fruits and vegetables (and jam)...Bernard Durand of Buffalo, Minnesota.

12. Four autographed books by John Durand...Steve and Debbie Decker of Delavan, Wisconsin.

A hearty Thank You to those who donated items for the JohnnyRide 2010 raffle: Scalzo Hospitality, Inc., Little Luxuries, Peter and Julie Durand, Chuck and Anne Fick, Dan and Virginia James, the Green Bay Packers, Pat and Alice Keppel.

A hearty Thank You also to those who contributed food and labor for the picnic. You all help to make the JohnnyRide picnic a special occasion.

For the record, those participating in JohnnyRide 2010 were:

Young Riders: Jed Durand, Giselle Durand, Ellis Durand, Stuart Durand.

Adult Riders: Marilyn Durand, Ellen Olson, Steve Decker, Debbie Decker, Mike Durand, Peter Durand, Chuck Fick, Paul Durand, Patricia Durand, Mary Miller, Mary Ann Pettitt, Cindy Skack, Dee Ann Mclellan, Mike Mclellan, Harvey Baird, Marie Baird, John Durand.

Ride Support: Pat Keppel, Bob Olson, Tom Olson.

Picnic Crew: Alice Keppel (mgr), Tonya Schmitt, Julie Durand, Virginia Durand, Beth Utecht (and others).

A very special Thank You goes to Bob and Ellen Olson for hosting JohnnyRide 2010. Both were hobbling a bit...Ellen from her broken toe, and Bob from having had a knee replaced just three weeks earlier. Their good humor and fortitude amidst so much activity is truly impressive.

A special Thank You also to Anna Webber for her work on the banner and the special signage for JohnnyRide 2010, and to Peter and Julie Durand for helping out with the raffle.

And a special Thank You to Alice Keppel for her conscientious, hard work to prepare and manage the putting together of a delicious meal enjoyed by dozens.

The date for the next JohnnyRide is easy to remember, because it is the same date as this year, only a year from now. The 8th annual JohnnyRide will be held on Saturday, September 17, 2011. Same time, same place. We hope to see you there.