

## JohnnyRide 2012

*Jennifer Olson*

JohnnyRide 2012 marked the 9<sup>th</sup> year the ride has taken place. This year, however, it nearly didn't happen due to a dismal weather forecast. It was almost cancelled, but because of the rallying support of family and friends, the ride went on. The ride celebrates the life of Johnny Durand, late son of John and Janice Durand, by raising money for academic scholarships. This year \$3,400 was raised, of which \$1,500 was reserved for the 2013 scholarships. Also, \$1,000 will be deposited in the investment fund which has crept over the \$25,000 mark, halfway to the goal of \$50,000.

The ride has been held at different locations, but the past few years it has been held near Bob and Ellen Olson's home in western Wisconsin, deep in the heart of the St. Croix Valley. There were fifteen riders and most finished despite the chilly and extremely windy conditions. They were attended by SAG wagon driver Bob Olson.

After the ride, almost fifty people attended the potluck luncheon, organized by Alice Keppel. It was held next door at Marv and Sharon Utecht's Carr-Creek Ranch, in an all purpose building complete with kitchen facilities and plenty of tables and chairs. Janice Durand was a special guest this year and spoke on how much the ride meant to her in keeping Johnny's name alive. There was a meal blessing by Harv Baird. Then came the home cooked fare of pulled pork sandwiches, turkey and barbeque ribs specially cooked by Jack and Anna Webber. Kristin Keppel's scotcheroos, bars made with rice krispies, peanut butter, chocolate and butterscotch chips, were a big hit. And let's not forget all the other wonderful dishes and desserts.

The post-ride lunch program and raffle were emceed by Peter Durand, Johnny's brother. His wife Julie recorded the raffle prizes and winners. Assisting in the prize- giving were Stuart Durand, son of Peter and Julie, and Jed Durand, son of Paul and Barb. This year the prize table was bountiful with many wonderful donations by friends and family. The prizewinners were:

Gerald Durand, Champlain MN	Hunter's basket
Manette Durand, Clarksdale MS	Autumn basket
John Bigler, Williams Bay WI	Autumn basket
Oliver & Dee Durand, Roseburg OR	DHF mugs
Bonnie Mackesey, Madison WI	Tastefully Simple basket
Gaye Daw & Butch Barton, Joaquin TX	Patriotic eagle bookends
Gaye Daw & Butch Barton, Joaquin TX	Tastefully Simple basket
Robert & Lee Ann Durand, Austin TX	Patriotic eagle statue
Richard A. Durand, Sun Lakes, AZ	Green Bay Packer's football/signed!
Chuck Fick, Plainview MN	Primrose Parlor gift certificate
Audrey & Al Moore, Yorktown VA	Wine glasses
Tom & Linda Price, Boyceville WI	Dog lover's basket
Mona Finder, Baldwin WI	John Durand book set
Mike Durand, Burnsville MN	DHF mugs
Anna Webber, St Paul MN	Fall gourmet basket

Once the raffle was finished, Andy Keppel shared his thoughts about his life-changing, near death experience. Last summer he suffered a “Sudden Cardiac Death” which normally has only a 5% survival rate. Because those around him knew CPR and his close proximity to the local fire department he was resuscitated. Andy talked about the true meaning of living a rich life surrounded by friends and family.

In the Durand family we are blessed with many loving members of our clan. As the New Year begins, let's take the time to remember those past and present, and how truly fortunate we are for all the support we receive.

Next year's JohnnyRide 2013 will be the 10th and will truly be a celebratory occasion. If you have never participated you are missing out on a great time with good food and the company and support of friends and family. The 2013 JohnnyRide will be held on Saturday, September 21.♣