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JOE DATSKO'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

By David Patria

February 5, 2011 was a special time for our friend and long-time AABTS member Joe Datsko. His family planned a celebration of his 90th birthday (which was actually on February 4). The celebration was held at Glacier Manor where Joe is an active resident.



The Birthday Cake

The Hanson Hall was the site of the party and, at the party's peak, it was filled with nearly 70 persons. The family invited AABTS membership to share in the festivities, and, like good guests, we brought something to the party.



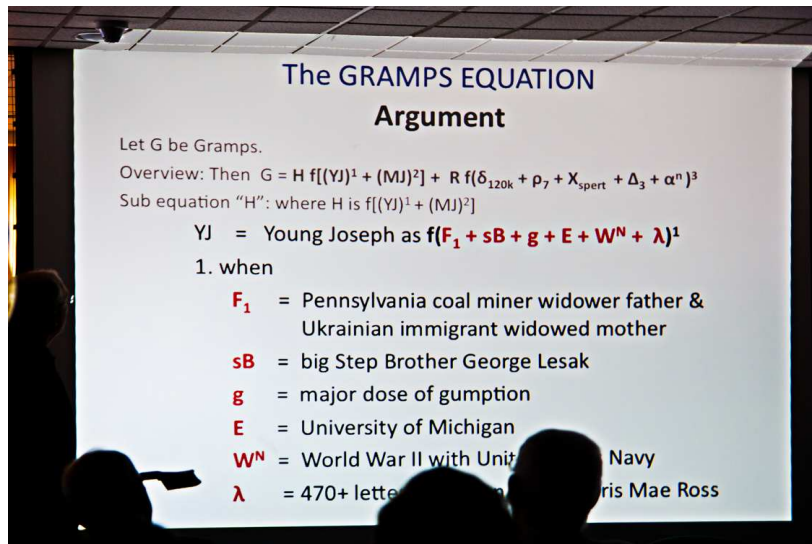
Enjoying the Abundant Food

Joe had mentioned to members of his family that AABTS members were enamored with Dexter Bakery donuts and fresh cider, so the Club went all out to make this happen. We tried to offset that calorie overload with a large veggie tray as a further contribution to the party.



Joe Datsko and Family

The Club was well represented with 40 or more members who came to wish Joe a very happy birthday and many more years on the bike. Decorations included a map of Joe's five bike trips across the USA, pictures of his life and the new bike his family gave him (in July) for his birthday.



Gramps Equation

A unique feature of the party was an equation representing Joe's life time: early youth, wartime service, marriage to Doris, family growth, and career as a gifted teacher. The attendees were held in thrall by the clever way in which the functions of the equation were expanded into details of his life, a unique and very appropriate way to honor Joe. AABTS also presented Joe with a very special 100,000 mile cycling jersey as a mark his outstanding achievement.



Joe's 100,000 Mile AABTS Jersey

As a final note, Joe and the audience were treated to musical performances by his family members and then by a combined choral group which also included members of the



Chorale Serenade

club. Some of our snow-phobic members who annually retreat to warmer climes in Florida sent a video of their stirring (if somewhat off-key) rendition of "We're Going Out for a Bike Ride"! The noticeable contribution of the shrill parrot calls was also noted with merriment.



Look! You don't Believe me? Lance really retired!

Just to provide an incentive for exercise at Glacier Hills, Joe has started another bike club and, for the mostly staff who ride with him, he is tough to keep up with. I have heard one of them say that they could barely do eleven miles, and Joe would just keep riding and encouraging them to keep up. At 90, this is an unbelievable performance. Joe doesn't ignore AABTS either. He leads a 25 mile ride every Friday morning which starts at Dhu Varran road and proceeds on Whitmore Lake road to the town of Whitmore Lake for a Coney lunch stop before returning.



Dan Harrison Presents the 100,000 Mile Jersey to Joe

We don't know how many 90 year young bicycle riders there are in the state or, for that matter, in the USA. There are not likely to be many of them, and probably none of them with Joe's level of riding, stamina and good humor. AABTS Wishes Joe Datsko many more years of road riding and participation in AABTS activities.

GARY FRANCIS ENCOURAGEMENT QUILT

By Lynda Collins




Quilt Presented to Gary Francis

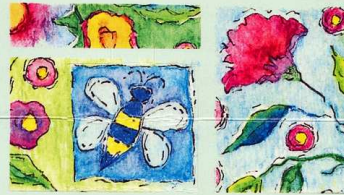
On December 13, 2010 Gail Preston delivered to Gary Francis the bicycle quilt she had made for him. This quilt, measuring 30" X 60", is made of bicycle shirts donated and signed by 30 members of AABTS. Most of the shirts do come from FEF members. One special shirt was donated by John Waterman and this year's PEAC staff, who signed the 2010 shirt for Gary.

The quilt is blue, because that is Gary's favorite color, and the tee-shirts are bordered with music fabric, since Gary is a tenor in a barbershop quartet. Gail also included on the quilt the treble clef and bass clef along with the embroidery of AABTS at his wife Linda's request and "Singing Cyclist" which

is his email signature. Gail originally thought of a lap robe for Gary's wheelchair, but so many shirts were donated that the quilt grew to queen sized.

*Gail, That quilt is gorgeous, awesome!
Gary loves it and shows it off to
everyone. He printed the note
below, with my dictation help.*

*Also,  Linda
Many thanks to all who donated
the shirts*



*GAIL,
THANK YOU FOR THE QUILT,
IT IS BEAUTIFUL!
I WILL TREASURE IT.
GARY FRANCIS*

Thank-you Note from Linda and Gary Francis

Gary has steadily improved since his July, 2009 accident when he was hit directly on Hines Drive. He now weighs 155—up from 98 and 5 pounds over his ideal riding weight. He says he is fat, but Bud Preston says, "He looks good." Gary is looking forward to going home but is unsure when that will be. His wife Linda is looking for a new home that can accommodate Gary's wheelchair. Gary and Linda were thrilled with the quilt, and some tears were shed on both sides as Gail and Bud presented it.

OUT FROM UNDER THE HELMET

LEAH ATWATER:

MUSICIAN, PILOT, AND ADVENTRESS

By Lynda Collins

Leah Atwater usually bikes with the AABTS on the Sunrise Ride on Saturdays and the Tuesday ride out of South Lyon to Kensington. She's been a member of the club since 1995. Beyond these rides and other

club rides she has ridden PALM four times plus Elderhostels in Northern Indiana, Missouri, Quebec, Denmark, Germany, Austria and France.

Leah graduated with a degree in music from Oberlin College, where she met her husband, John. They started married life in New Haven, CT, where John was finishing medical school at Yale. After a stint in the Public Health Service which took them to the Washington, D.C., area and Laredo, TX, they spent two years in Baltimore, MD, while John completed a Doctor of Public Health degree at Johns Hopkins. John's first job in public health was in Trenton, NJ, followed two years later by being appointed New Haven Health Director with adjunct appointments at Yale. In 1973, the Atwaters (all five of them) moved to Ann Arbor, where John ran the Washtenaw County Health Department and had an adjunct appointment teaching at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

Leah played violin first in the Trenton Symphony and then in the New Haven Symphony, with occasional stints in the pit of the Shubert Theater playing pre-Broadway shows. When she arrived in Ann Arbor she enjoyed more than ten years playing in the violin section of the Ann Arbor Symphony and still plays string quartets just for fun.

One of the Atwaters' main outside interests was flying. John became a private pilot when they were living in New Haven. Leah waited until their boys were grown and then got her pilot's license here in Ann Arbor in 1985. For the next fifteen years they flew all over the lower 48 states, including a camping by airplane retirement trip to Pinedale, WY. Their longest journey was from Ann Arbor to San Diego, CA, but there were several trips to Seattle, Washington with stops along the way. The most frequent flights were to visit their children and nine grandchildren in Indianapolis, IN, and Rochester, NY.



Leah Atwater Pilots with Husband John
as Co-Pilot Their Plane

The first few years after retirement they took two volunteer opportunities overseas where John taught public health. The first was in Tamil Nadu, South India, in an outreach program of the Christian Medical College of Valhore. After one year at home, they accepted a two year assignment in Sierra Leone, West Africa, as United Nations Volunteers on a WHO project in the city of Bo. While in Sierra Leone, Leah worked with the staff to develop a Skills Manual for public health workers and helped a colleague write her memoirs which were later published.



John and Leah Atwater Visiting in Iceland

The Atwaters moved from New Haven, CT, to Ann Arbor, MI, in 1973 by way of a visit to Leah's sister in South Africa, with stops along the way in London, Kenya, Tanzania and Athens. This whet their appetite for travel. Since then they have been in every continent except Antarctica, from Cairo to Capetown; from Mexico to Chili; from England to Turkey; from Greece to Russia; from Thailand to China plus Australia and New Zealand.

The next time you see Leah pedaling her way through Kensington, realize that she's been on a long, adventurous path to get there.

WORST DAY OF THE YEAR RIDE

By Paul Alman,
"Official" AABTS Ride Leader
Photos: J. Rodgers

First, thanks to Ann Hunt for coming to registration at 11:30 AM to help sign up AABTS members who wished to get credit for mileage under the Club guidelines.

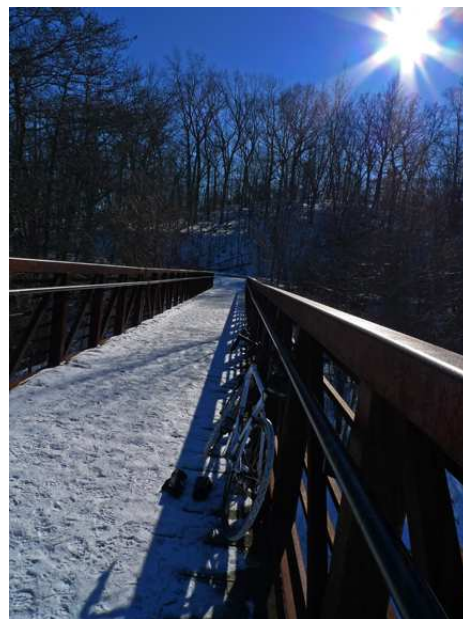
Worst Day of the Year my a**! Sunny, no wind, bright clear skies and the temperatures in double digits! What was so "Worst" about that? No rain or snow, most roads perfectly clear (OK some of the in town roads—think Burns Park hadn't seen a City truck since September) and everyone I talked to was in great spirits. I have had my "talk" with DeWight Plotner, ride planner, coordinator and guru (and owner of Wheels in Motion) and gave him my strong, strong comments about false advertising.



Riders Dressed Appropriately

So, I "drove" yes, drove, down to Farmers Market around 11:00 AM, put out the AABTS Ride Sheets, and talked to the dozens and dozens of riders milling about, waiting for the noon start of the 40-mile road ride. I knew that over 125 riders had signed up for the 5 different rides under the Worst Day of the Year umbrella (40-mile road, 20-mile road, 15 mile mountain bike, 12-mile around

town, and 6-mile around town) but given the perfect day, I expected more riders to sign up day-of-ride. Sure enough, the first group numbered over 40 and they went with their SAG car. A few AABTS members were present (2), but the bulk of the riders were U/M Cycling Team and AA Velo Club members. I left around 12:30 PM to return home, change my clothes and get back down in time to lead the 2 PM Around Town ride. I picked up 2 neighborhood riders who wanted to join me (later, they won the AABTS free annual membership drawing!) and the 4 mile ride downtown was . . . ideal! I had once again, dressed perfectly for the event. Not even a cold toe! However, a big however, was the standing around waiting for the ride to start. DeWight, his wife Vicki, his two kids, and his staff, did everything they could to make riders comfortable - hot chocolate, snacks, great happy support, etc. (Note: Send the whole Wheels in Motion Crew a gold star or two. They stood out in the cold for hours, registering riders, giving away free swag, and never once, did a smile leave their faces. Hmm, maybe their smiles were frozen on their faces.)



Cold but Sunny

The Around Town ride left on time, with John Clinthorn agreeing to taking the point

position, while I took up the sweep. Once the 30 or so riders got moving, everyone had a great, great time. I did help one person back to the finish at the Ann Arbor Brewery where once again, DeWight and his crew set up bike racks, security, and welcomed all riders at the end of the ride. I modified the route slightly so that our ride didn't have to ride over the ice on the bike path heading to Gallup Park from the Fuller play fields, but as far as I heard, no one had any problems, no falls, no flats. So again, where in the past we had rain, sloppy roads, flat tires, how can we even consider this a Worst Day of the Year Ride?



Huron River Frozen Solid

After the rides, everyone—and there were a total of 166!, yes 166 riders, gathered at the Ann Arbor Brewery on Washington, shared in great warm soup and bread, great beer, of course, and a number of drawings for riders with prizes supplied both by Wheels in Motion and James Knight, the Louis Garneau rep. Great camaraderie, happy faces, only one frozen beard that I noted, and no complaints from everyone, except that the afternoon had to end.

So, how many of those 166 riders signed up as AABTS members on the ride sheets? Well I will leave that up to you to guess, and I will even award a Livestrong yellow bracelet to the member who comes closest to the percentage of riders who rode on Sunday, who were AABTS members.

Care to guess?

Just post your guess here, or send me an email at pdalman@att.net

Finally, this is the 4th time, I believe, that I have led this ride. It was amazing to share this experience with so many old and new friends, to “begin” the season realizing that getting out the door, just like during the rest of the year, is the hardest part. Once on the bike, as we all know, we can only wonder why in the world we would have even thought about not doing this! To all who participated, chime in and share your experiences, to those of you who missed this chance, put it on your calendar for next year (usually the 3rd Sunday in January) and come out and re-learn that riding with like minded people trumps the weather every time!

Thanks, and see you on the road.

BICYCLE HAPPY COSTA RICA

By Jim Datsko

Costa Rica comes chock full of bright birds, fresh tropical fruits, active volcanoes, ocean beaches, mountain-grown coffee and plenty of surprises. One thing that surprised me was the sheer volume of bicycles.



Our Arenal Springs Resort
with Active Volcano in the Background

I have to transport myself back to the “Happy Days” of America’s 1950’s to recall a time or place where people were all so relaxed and happy as they currently are in Costa Rica. Our 10-day motor coach tour covered most of their country and everywhere we saw friendly, happy, smiling citizens. The most

typical scene in the villages and towns would be a modest but tidy solid house with the front door wide open all day long, a bicycle or two temporarily parked on the front porch, and any residents eagerly waving to our luxury Mercedes-Benz shiny tour bus as we motored down their street. Even the dogs absorbed their master's happiness, as they were all mellow and friendly with no barking or aggressiveness.

It was rare to find a store that didn't sell bicycles along with their other merchandise. Everything from appliance stores to motorcycle shops also sold bicycles. Children everywhere rode them to school, each of which had an adjoining soccer field to cultivate that national past time. Adults rode them year round, rainy season or not, commuting to work, for shopping, and general transportation. Most of the bikes had fat tires to accommodate both gravel roads and paved roads, a few of which seemed to have more potholes than solid pavement. I did however see three different groups of club riders on good racing bikes all wearing their club jerseys during my brief stay there, and like some of our AABTS riders they rode whether rainy or sunny.



Living for Two Days at the Caribbean Jungle Eco-Resort with the Monkeys, Sloths, Iguanas, and Brightly Colored Toucan Birds

On the Caribbean, or eastern side of Costa Rica it seemed like bikes were their main form of transportation, but if going longer distances or if in a hurry they might have a small 125cc motorcycle for family use. Here many of them worked on the huge banana or organic pineapple plantations, or in eco-

tourism. In the central mountainous region and on the western Pacific Ocean side we would see more cars, but bikes, pedal and powered, were still the norm. Mild year-round weather comfortably accommodates bikes as sole transportation. My only complaint was that the roads and highways mostly lacked paved shoulders, but that didn't deter the bicyclists one bit. They were everywhere you looked hugging the right edge.

Ticos, as Costa Ricans proudly call themselves, are rightfully proud of the fact that they have the highest standard of living of any central-American country, probably because they have a stable democracy in this primarily Catholic country. Many North Americans are retiring there now to take advantage of the lower cost of living, healthy foods, and good weather. Shortly after the Ticos abolished their army in 1948, a village of American Quakers in 1951 settled in the hills overlooking the south shore of huge Lake Arenal, and their Monte Verde cheese and ice cream are now famous.



Martha, Our Tour Guide, Holding Two Huge Beetles to Our Amazement

Our tour guide, Martha, was a cute mid-30's strawberry blonde born in Grand Rapids. When she was barely one-year old her parents took a vacation to Costa Rica and liked it so much they learned subsistence farming, and stayed. Though Martha is a US Citizen with a college degree or two and occasionally visits Michigan and the USA, she prefers her Tico life enthusiastically showing others Costa Rica. Our Caravan.com tour was a tremendous bargain at only \$995 for the all-inclusive

10-day land package including luxury hotels and three gourmet buffets/day. Most tours charged 2x to 3x that amount. Since Caravan has by far the largest volume of tourists it negotiates deep, deep discounts everywhere. I've heard that all of their tour guides are great, however for the ultimate travel experience request a tour led by Martha who is so entertaining with the tour bus microphone I suggested she be given her own TV show.

**TANDEM RIDERS ESCAPE
MAJOR INJURY IN FLORIDA
CAR-BIKE CRASH**

By John M. Barr

John and Marlene Barr, long time AABTS members, escaped major injury when their tandem bicycle was struck by a motorist in Florida, January 21st. The Barrs were on the fifth day of a nine day Wandering Wheels Cocoa Beach to Key West, Florida bike ride when the accident happened.

The couple was biking south on a bike/pedestrian paved path just south of Coconut Grove, Miami, Florida. The road at that point is a narrow two lane road. Large trees with no shoulder line the west side of the road with a wide bike path on the east side. As the Barrs were on the path, crossing a driveway entrance, a young motorist came out of the drive and looked left but not right and did not see the bike coming from her right. Instead of stopping at the driveway intersection, as required by law, the motorist continued moving out into the intersection, even though the bike was already in the intersection.

The bike was almost past the car when the left front of the car struck the rear tire of the bike, knocking the bike down and into the road. John and Marlene went flying over the bike and hit the pavement. Fortunately, a northbound bus driver saw what was happening and stopped so northbound traffic did not run over the couple.

Marlene suffered a cracked rib and bruises and John suffered severe bruises and contusions but no broken bones. Now two weeks

after the accident they are both feeling a lot better.

The driver received a citation for failure to yield. Contrary to the popular perception of Florida drivers being old, the driver causing the accident was a young person. She was, however, new to the area, and not accustomed to watching for bike and pedestrian traffic on the path. She only looked left and not right.

Since Florida has a “no fault” auto insurance law it appears that the Barrs will have to seek any compensation for their damages with their own auto insurance company!

The moral? Bike riding can be fun and exciting. But we have to be ever vigilant as many drivers are not looking for us. Bicyclists should wear bright clothing, be careful, expect the un-expected, and ride very defensively.

The Barrs are planning their next bike trip after their bike is fixed!

**NEW “IMPROVED”
CHIP SEALING FOR 2011
ROAD REPORT**

by Ted Green

The Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) has posted its chip sealing plans for 2011. The good news is that for the first time the chip sealed roads will also be “fog sealed” which applies a sealant over the chips to smooth out the road and should make for better bicycling. The fog seal is applied 2–3 days after the road is chip sealed, about the same time the extra chips are vacuumed up.

The WCRC is considering the fog sealing an “experiment” because it obviously adds cost. It has been well received in other states. Assuming we bicyclists find it an improvement, we need to send our thanks and feedback to the Road Commission in hopes that this practice will continue.

Personally I think this “improved” chip sealing is a result of our vastly improved relationship with the WCRC due to our donated money in 2010. I think everyone at the WCRC fully understood the outcry over

the chip sealing of Whitmore Lake road on the exact same day we handed \$40,000 to them.

To reiterate what I tried to explain last year—chip sealing is the most cost effective way to maintain a road and it should be applied BEFORE obvious cracks form; ideally every 5 to 7 years. Also the Whitmore Lake “snafu” was mandated by the Federal Government which classifies Whitmore Lake Rd as a strategic road in case US-23 is closed.

Here is the list of the roads will have crack and chip sealing work this summer.

- * Carpenter Road from 1,500 feet north of Willis Road to Textile Road in Ypsilanti Township.
- * Dixboro Road from Geddes Road to Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road in Ann Arbor Township.
- * Textile Road from Maple Road to about 1,300 feet east of State Road and excluding the State Road intersection in Pittsfield Township.
- * Scio Church Road from Strieter Road to Zeeb Road in Scio Township.
- * Pleasant Lake Road from Reno Road to Lima Center Road in Freedom Township.
- * Pleasant Lake Road from Parker Road to Zeeb Road in Lodi Township.
- * Old US-12 from the western county line to Wilkinson Street in Sylvan Township to the Chelsea city limits.
- * Old US-12 from Freer Road to Fletcher Road in the City of Chelsea and Lima Township.
- * Pleasant Lake Road from Fletcher Road to Reno Road in Freedom Township.

See also: <http://www.annarbor.com/news/road-commissions-taps-10-county-roads-for-summer-maintenance-work/>

Hopefully the new fog sealing will make the chip sealing less disruptive to bicycling.

Happy riding!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dave [Patria]: I wanted to thank you again for helping to coordinate the bike club's support for Dad's [Joe Datsko] party. I know the success of the party exceeded everyone's expectations. Everything came together so nicely, and the attendance was fantastic in spite of the weather. Thank you for taking pictures. Please extend our gratitude to the Board for making this party the highlight of Dad's recent years. The bike jersey is beautiful and I know Dad will look forward to wearing it.

Thanks again, and safe riding!

Deanna

FOR SALE

Raleigh R-3000 Touring Mens 23" 21 speed—\$325

Aluminum frame, Hunter green, new hybrid tires, brakes, seat, annual tune-up. 33" stand over height. Excellent condition. Call 734-788-1820 (Canton)

Linda Whiteaker

Email: linda.whiteaker@hp.com

734-788-1820

AABTS SPRING POTLUCK
Thursday April 14, 2011
at the Grotto Club
2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor
Set up & Socialize 6:00 p.m.
Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

- * Bring a dish to feed six
- * BYO place setting
- * Do not bring chips/drinks/snacks, etc.
(will be provided)

- Please no merchandise sales

SPRING POTLUCK SPECIAL FEATURES:

- * AABTS Board Member Elections
- * 2010 Annual Mileage Awards & Trophies
- * 2010 Personalized Mileage Patch Awards
- * 2010 Lifetime Mileage Patch & Pin Awards
- * 2010 Ride Captain Prize Drawings
- * 2010 Commuter Mileage Awards

AABTS BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS
AT APRIL 14 POTLUCK
Three to be Elected
By Dan Harrison

The club will hold its Annual Meeting at the April 14, 2011 potluck. Three of the five AABTS board members will be elected at the potluck. Board members serve for a two-year term and set club policy, develop long range plans, get club volunteers, and name officers. It is a good way to get to know the club, meet new people, and help guide our club. Please consider nominating yourself. If you have any questions or would like to nominate yourself please contact the club President Doug Tidd, Board Chairperson Don Broadway, Dan Harrison or any Club Board Member prior to the potluck. You can email your nomination by April 7, 2011 to:

Don Broadway at don@xyzijk.com

Doug Tidd at dougtidd@yahoo.com

Dan Harrison at a2dan@sbcglobal.net

Board Member	Term Ends	Email Address
Chris Marble	03/2011	chris.marble@gmail.com
Deb Beer	03/2011	dsbeer20@yahoo.com
Don Broadway (Chair)	03/2011	don@xyzijk.com
Tom Powell	03/2012	tpowell@umich.edu
Dave Patria	03/2012	underbpatd@aol.com

Future Potluck Dates for 2011 are:

Spring: Thursday April 14, 2011

- Board Elections, Awards, Mileage Patches, Trophies, Ride Captain Prizes, OHR Volunteer sign-up, Annual Meeting

Fall: Sunday September 25, 2011

- 2011 Mileage Patch Design Contest, Name Officers and maybe a special presentation

Holiday: Wednesday Dec 7, 2011

- Entertainment
-

May--June Newsletter Deadline**April 23, 2011**
